

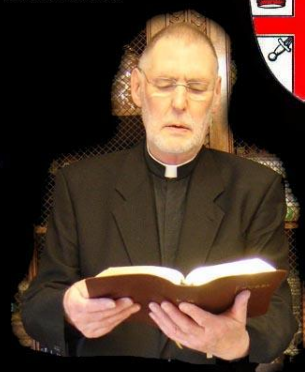


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**Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.
Psalm 119: 105**



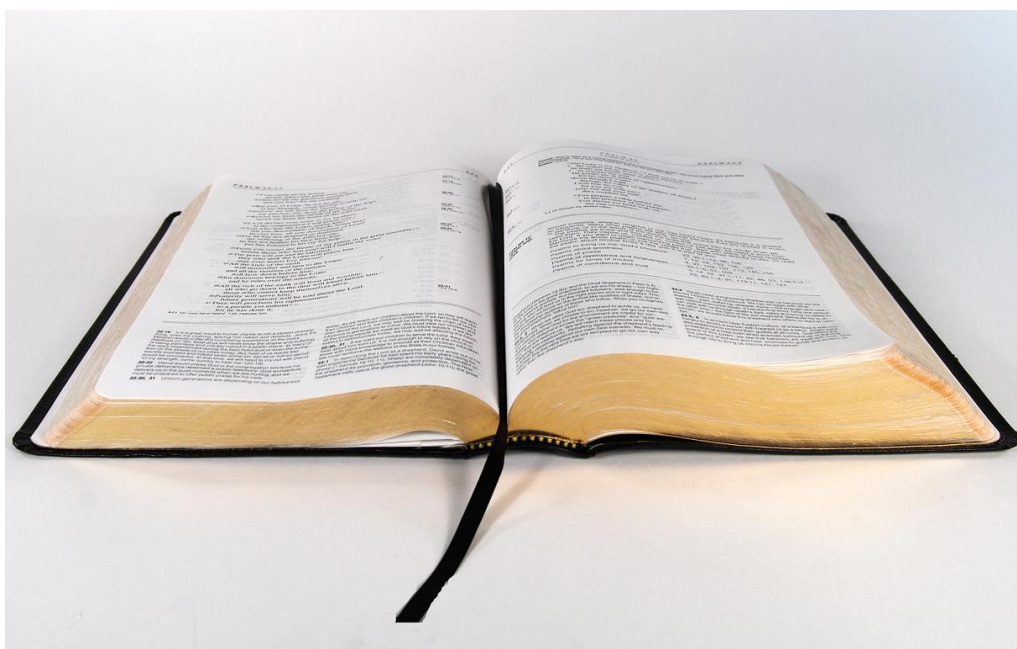
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Evangelical House Churches

Berea Bible Handbook – Part Twelve

The Gospel of John

**Research and Study by Rev. Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D.
Commentary on the Gospel of John, by Arno C. Gaebelein**



**Dwell in the light of thy Lord, and let thy soul be always ravished
with His love.**

Meditation from the New Park Street Pulpit:

A Johannine Short Exposition on 1 John 3:1-10 by Charles H. Spurgeon (Baptist Minister). (The New Park Street Pulpit)

(Public Domain)

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

As dear Dr. Hawker said concerning this, there is a chapter in every word and a sermon in every letter. How it opens with a "Behold!" because it is such a striking portion of sacred Scripture, that the Holy Ghost would have us pay particular attention to it. "*Behold!*" says he, "read other Scriptures if you like, with a glance, but stop here. I have put up a way-mark to tell you there is something eminently worthy of attention buried beneath these words." "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on *us*." Consider who we were, and who we are now; ay, and what we feel ourselves to be even when divine grace is powerful in us. And yet, beloved, we are called "*the sons of God*." It is said that when one of the learned heathens was translating this, he stopped and said, "No; it cannot be; let it be written 'Subjects,' not 'Sons,' for it is impossible we should be called 'the sons of God.'" What a high relationship is that of a son to his father! What privileges a son has from his father! What liberties a son may take with his father! and oh! what obedience the son owes to his father, and what love the father feels towards the son! But all *that*, and more than *that*, we now have through Christ. "Behold!" ye angels! stop, ye seraphs! here is a thing more wonderful than heaven with its walls of jasper. Behold, universe! open thine eyes, O world. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." Well, we are content to go with him in his humiliation, for we are to be exalted with him.

"*Beloved, now are we the sons of God*." That is easy to read; but it is not so easy to feel. "*Now are we the sons of God*." How is it with your heart this morning? Are you in the lowest depths of sorrow and suffering? "*Now are you a son of God*." Does corruption rise within your spirit, and grace seem like a poor spark

trampled under foot? "Beloved, *now* are *you* a son of God." Does your faith almost fail you? and are your graces like a candle well nigh blown out by the wind! Fear not, beloved; it is not your graces, it is not your frames, it is not your feelings, on which you are to live: you must live simply by naked faith on Christ. "Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God." With all these things against us, with the foot of the devil on our neck, and the sword in his hand ready to slay us—beloved *now* in the very depths of our sorrow, wherever we may be—*now*, as much in the valley as on the mountain, as much in the dungeon as in the palace, as much when broken on the wheel of suffering as when exalted on the wings of triumph—"beloved, *now* are we the sons of God." "Ah!" but you say, "see how I am arrayed! my graces are not bright; my righteousness does not shine with apparent glory." But read the next: "*It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.*" We are not so much like him now, but we have some more refining process to undergo, and death itself, that best of all friends, is yet to wash us clean. "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

"And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."

Believer, read these words in two senses. He was manifested to take away thy sins that thou hast committed; and that he accomplished, when "the just for the unjust," he sustained the penalties of them. And he was manifested to take away the power of thy sins; that is to say, to conquer thy reigning lusts, to take away thine evil imaginations, to purify thee, and make thee like himself. Well, beloved, what a mercy it is that some one was manifested to take away our sins from us! for some of us have been striving a long, long while, to conquer our sins, and we cannot do it. We thought we had driven them out, but they had "chariots of iron," and we could not overcome them; they lived "in the hill country," and we could not get near them. As often as we worsted them in one battle, they came upon us thick and strong, like an army of locusts; when heaps and heaps had been destroyed they seemed as thick as ever. Ah! but there is a thought—they shall all be taken away. "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins;" and so he will. The time will come when you and I shall stand without spot or blemish before the throne of God: for they are "without fault before the throne of God" at this moment, and so shall we be ere long.

"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him."

This plain, simple verse, has been twisted by some who believe in the doctrine of perfection, and they have made it declare that it is possible for some to abide in Christ, and therefore not to sin. But you will remark that it does not say, that *some* that abide in Christ do not sin; but it says that *none* who abide in Christ sin. "*Whosoever* abideth in him sinneth not." Therefore this passage is not to be applied to a few who attain to what is called by our Arminian friends the fourth degree—perfection; but it appertains to all believers; and of every soul in Christ it may be said, that he sinneth not. In reading the Bible, we read it simply as we would read another book. We ought not to read it as a preacher his text, with the intention of making something out of every word; but we should read it as we find it written: "*Whosoever* abideth in Christ sinneth not." Now we are sure that cannot mean that he does not sin at all, but it means that sins not habitually, he sins not designedly, he sins not finally, so as to perish. The Bible often calls a man righteous; but that does not mean that he is perfectly righteous. It calls a man a sinner, but it does not imply that he may not have done some good deeds in his life; it means that that is the man's general character. So with the man who abides in Christ: his general character is not that he is a sinner, but that he is a saint—he sinneth not openly wilfully before men. In his own heart, he has much to confess, but his life before his fellow creatures is such a one that it can be said of him: "*Whosoever* abideth in him sinneth not; but *whosoever* sinneth [the sins of this world. in which the multitude indulge] hath not seen him, neither known him."

"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."

That is the sign of it. Works are the fruits of grace. "He is righteous,"—not in himself; for mark how graces come in here—"He is righteous, even as HE is righteous." It will not allow our righteousness to be our own, but it brings us to Christ again. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous," not according to his own works, but "even as HE is righteous." Good works prove that I have perfect righteousness in Christ; they do not help the righteousness of Christ, nor yet in any way make me righteous. Good works are of no use whatever in the matter of justification: they only use they are, is, that they are for our comfort, for the benefit of others, and for the glory of God. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil."

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

It were well if we always remembered that practical godliness is the soul of godliness; that it is not talking religion, but walking religion which proves a man to be sincere; it is not having a religious tongue, but a religious heart; it is not a religious mouth, but a religious foot. The best evidence is the salvation of the soul. Avaunt! talkative; go thy way, thou mere professing formalist! Your ways lead down to hell, and your end shall be destruction; for "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

The Theology of the Gospel of John

Introduction: Is the Gospel of John History or Theology

All of these considerations leave us with a rather counter-intuitive conclusion—at least from the perspective of modern critical scholarship—namely that John's gospel actually contains clearer historiographical credentials than the Synoptics. After all the hits that John's gospel has taken over the years, this is remarkable fact.

Over the years, biblical scholars have challenged the historicity of the canonical gospels on a number of fronts. But, no gospel has taken it on the chin like the Gospel of John. Ever since Clement of Alexandria's famous statement that the gospel of John was "a spiritual Gospel" (recorded in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.14.7) critics have suggested that John has very little to do with history and has much more to do with theology.

The reasons for such critiques of John are not difficult to find. John writes the story of Jesus in a lengthy, drawn-out style, (quite different than the pithy language of the Synoptics), he includes unique events (e.g., the man born blind, raising Lazarus from the dead), and, most of all, he highlights the divinity and pre-existence of Jesus ("In the beginning was the Word").

If you want to know about the Jesus of history, the gospel of John, we are told, is not the place to go.

But, is it really true that John is more theology than history? In 2007, Richard Bauckham published an article “Historiographical Characteristics of the Gospel of John,” which answers precisely this question. In my opinion, Bauckham’s article has not received the attention it deserves.

In his article, Bauckham argues that John bears certain characteristics that his readers would have understood as historiographical—meaning they would have understood it to be a work of history. And these characteristics are actually more prominent in John than in the Synoptics. Let me just mention three of them.

1. *Topography/Geography*. John exhibits impressive knowledge of the places where the events of Jesus’ life took place. John’s numerous geographical references have been tested and found to be very accurate. But, even more than this, John is often much more *specific* than the Synoptics. He adds a layer of detail and precision that does not occur as often in the other three gospels, which tend to be more general in their geographical references.
2. *Eyewitness Testimony*. In the ancient world, good history was eyewitness history. For a historical account to be credible, a historian either needed to have witnessed the events himself, or he needed to have received his information from someone who did witness those events. Here, the Gospel of John stands out because it expressly claims to have been written by the “beloved disciple” (21:24) who was an eyewitness from the beginning (1:35-40) and present at the last supper (13:23).
3. *Length of Discourses*. While scholars suggest that John’s gospel must be embellished because the discourses are so much longer than the Synoptics, Bauckham makes almost the opposite point, namely that the Synoptics are more likely abbreviated versions of longer speeches. The Synoptic gospels give evidence of being summaries or condensed version of Jesus’ actual teachings (they are not for this reason unreliable; this was just what historians sometimes had to do). This leads to the rather surprising reality that John’s lengthy discourses are, historically speaking, *more realistic than the Synoptics*. They capture more accurately what Jesus would have probably sounded like.

All of these considerations leave us with a rather counter-intuitive conclusion—at least from the perspective of modern critical scholarship—namely that John’s gospel actually contains *clearer* historiographical credentials than the Synoptics. After all the hits that John’s gospel has taken over the years, this is remarkable fact. It is a reminder, once again, that the “consensus” of the academy has its limitations. Indeed, sometimes the truth lies in the opposite direction. Thus,

when it comes to John's gospel, one can truly say, "The last will be first, and the first will be last."

Characteristics

a. The Place of the Old Testament.

So much emphasis has been placed on Hellenistic influences on John's gospel that the part played by Old Testament ideas has not always been fully realized. There is much which bears on Jewish history. The gospel shows that Jesus was a part of that history, and that the Jews, in rejecting Christ, were rejecting the One who belonged to them (1:11). When he came to the Temple, he claimed a rightful authority over it (2:16). He charged his hearers with searching Scripture and yet not recognizing that it testified to him (5:39). He maintained that those who believed Moses would believe him (5:45f), implying that there was a clear continuity between them. As in Matthew the entry into Jerusalem on a donkey is viewed as a fulfilment of Old testament prophecy (12:14), while the unbelief of the Jews is illustrated from Isaiah (12:38-39). John alone records that at the crucifixion Jesus' legs were not broken, as a fulfilment of Scripture, and in this case the inviolability of Scripture is stressed. In John's gospel Jesus many times refers to Old testament figures, particularly Abraham. Appeal to Abrahamic descent forms the theme of the dialogue in chapter 8, reaching its climax in the claim that Abraham saw Christ's day (8:56). Nothing could express more clearly that there was a direct continuity between the Old and the New.

b. Teaching on the Spirit.

There is more of the Lord's teaching about the Spirit in John's gospel than in any other. In the Nicodemus discourse, the work of the Spirit in regeneration is clearly brought out (chap 3). Jesus insists on the spiritual nature of God (4:24), which requires a spiritual method of worship. This was a definite advance on the limited conception of Judaism. The Spirit of God was promised after the glorification of Jesus (7:39), when he would come as streams of refreshing water on those who believe in Christ. It is in the farewell discourses (14 - 16) that the fullest exposition of the Spirit's work is found. His names, Paraclete and Spirit of Truth, reveal his character, the former meaning Counsellor or Advocate or Comforter. 14:16-17 shows him as representative of Christ indwelling the believer. In 14:26 Jesus assures his disciples that the Holy Spirit will teach all things, recalling to their minds what Jesus had said. He will be a witness to Christ, which is to be his main

function (15:26; 16:14). He is the one who will convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (16:8-11) and who will guide his own people into all truth (16:13). It is evident that on the eve of his death Jesus' thoughts were much concentrated on the Spirit's work, but John's gospel alone focuses attention upon this.

c. Prevalence of Great Themes.

Unlike the teaching in the synoptics, the teaching in John tends to present abstract themes such as light, life, love, truth, abiding, which recur at intervals throughout the book. Some of these occur in the Prologue (1:1-18) which may be regarded as introductory to the whole, giving some indication of the type of themes to be presented in the following discourses.

d. Comparative Lack of Movement.

It is often noted that John's record tends to be static, although this is largely due to the amount of discourse material he presents. The proportion of narrative to discourse is much less in this gospel than in the synoptics. John seems not concerned in movements but rather concentrates on their significance. This characteristic of John's Gospel emphasizes the weakness of attempting to regard the book as in any sense biographical. This absorbing interest in discourse material gives a particular colouring to the gospel as a whole.

e. The Portrait of Jesus.

The title Son of man is less frequent in John than the other gospels, although where it does occur it is significant (eg: 1:51; 3:13-14). More often the title Son of God is used, or else the unqualified "Son". There is much stress on the filial relationship of Jesus to God and its significance for his relationship to believers. More on the inner consciousness of Jesus is revealed in this gospel than in the others and this reaches its climax in chapter 17, where he prays aloud. It is this special portrait of Jesus which is deeply impressive and makes the reader realize that the Person of Christ is beyond comprehension in its depths. It is easier to trace the messianic idea in John than in the other three gospels. Right from its commencement Christ's Messianic office is recognized by some of his disciples (1:41). At an early stage it is also recognized by the Samaritan woman following a direct claim by Jesus that he is the Messiah (chap 4). Perhaps the most characteristic feature in John's gospel regarding the Person of Christ is the Logos doctrine which serves as an introduction to his gospel. It is evident that the Jesus to be presented in the

body of the gospel is first portrayed as not only pre-existent but as possessing the nature of God himself.

John and the Synoptic Gospels

When the Gospels are studied, John always takes a place separate from the other three Gospels included in the New Testament, known as the Synoptic Gospels precisely because one can set them side by side in parallel and find that large sections overlap. In contrast, John's Gospel offers a rather different portrait of Jesus. Mark's Gospel starts with Jesus' baptism. John's Gospel begins its narrative section with the same event, but without mentioning that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. Matthew and Luke begin their Gospels with narratives concerning the events surrounding Jesus' birth. While John's Gospel presumes that Jesus was born, it shows no interest in this event *per se*. Instead, John's Gospel begins with the Word who was in the beginning with God, the Word who subsequently became flesh and dwelt among us in the human life of Jesus. Language similar to this, drawn from Jewish traditions about the figure of Wisdom, is found in the epistles, as for example in Colossians 1:15-20 and Hebrews 1:1-3. But in contrast even with these writers, who do use rather exalted language in reference to Jesus, John's Gospel still has important differences. The Jesus described in John's Gospel walks around on earth conscious that his real origins are in heaven. Even if we presume that a reasonable amount of time passed between the composition and redaction of the Synoptic Gospels and the composition and editing of John's Gospel, we are still left wondering *how* the Gospel of John ended up being so different, and *why* or *what factors* led its author (and any subsequent editors who may have been involved with the process) to produce a Gospel that presents Jesus so distinctively. In what follows I will attempt to provide a short introduction to the 'what' and 'why' of John's distinctive characteristics.

Let us begin by looking at some of the distinctive features of the Gospel of John a bit more closely, before going on to ask why such differences might exist. In the Synoptics, Jesus is mostly a wandering teacher and healer, a storyteller, speaking mostly in parables with an emphasis on the Kingdom of God. In contrast, John's Gospel contains long discourses in the first person. Although statistics can at times be misleading, here I think a simple numerical count shows up a genuine and important difference. The term 'kingdom' appears 47 times in Matthew, 18 times in Mark, and 37 times in Luke; in John, it occurs only 7 times. And whereas the first person pronoun 'I' appears on Jesus' lips only 17 times in Matthew, 9 times in Mark and 10 in Luke, in John Jesus is presented as using 'I' a full 118 times! Rather than speak of the 'Kingdom of God', John's Gospel has a preference for the phrase 'eternal life' (for these figures see James

Dunn, *The Evidence for Jesus*, London: SCM, 1985, pp.34-35. See also Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways*, London: SCM, 1991, p.314 n.56 & n.58). While John does contain illustrations that are not wholly unlike the Synoptic parables, more typical of John's style are the well-known 'I am' sayings: 'I am the light of the world', 'I am the bread of life', 'I am the good shepherd' and so on. The well-known language of being 'born again' is also exclusive to John's Gospel, although Matthew and Paul do speak of new creation, and the Synoptics know a similar tradition which refers to the need to become as children in order to enter the kingdom of God (see Dunn, *Evidence for Jesus*, p.38). Similarly, whereas the main dialogue partners of Jesus in the Synoptics are the Pharisees, John groups all Jesus' opponents together under the common heading 'the Jews', a phrase that we will need to look at more closely.

How do these considerations affect one's assessment of the historicity of John's Gospel? Ordinary believers in churches are for the most part used to taking the words attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of John as straightforward accounts of the words of the historical Jesus. However, to those who read the Gospels with an openness to the possibility of different voices saying different things, it is immediately apparent that there are huge differences between the presentation of Jesus found in the Synoptic Gospels and in John. One problem that immediately arises is that the general reliability of the Synoptic accounts makes the Johannine presentation appear suspect from a historian's point of view, and the fact that tradition makes John the latest Gospel does nothing to allay our suspicion. Yet a number of recent writers have helpfully shown evidence that if John is not a straightforward account of the historical Jesus, neither is it a pure work of fiction. C. H. Dodd (1963) changed the tide of scholarship on this issue by a detailed study of the historical details in John and of sayings in John which appear to be independent versions of sayings recorded in the Synoptics. John Robinson (1985) took this argument to an extreme in arguing that John's picture, while different, is just as reliable as the Synoptic portrait, since it stems also from the historical Jesus. While Robinson downplays the distinctiveness of John at times, he makes a number of important points that have not been taken with sufficient seriousness by the scholarly community. At any rate, a fair, balanced, middle position is that taken by James Dunn (1985). In his view, to regard John as simply historical is to ignore the vast difference between the way the Jesus presented in his Gospel speaks in comparison with the Synoptics. For example, the language of the Kingdom abounds in the Synoptics but is extremely rare in John, while the Johannine Jesus uses the first person pronoun 'I' over a hundred times, in comparison with less than twenty occurrences in the Synoptics. There is also a huge difference in the frequency of Father/Son language. But to regard John as pure fiction is to ignore the fact that many of John's details and settings for discourses seem to be historically reliable. The only answer seems to be to

regard the author of the Fourth Gospel as doing what was a frequent practice in his time: based on the words of his master, the author created discourses in which he presented what he considers that his master would have said in response to certain new situations which have arisen since his death. One may usefully compare John's presentation of Jesus with Plato's presentation of Socrates' trial, where it is generally assumed that Plato did not present an account of what Socrates said on that occasion, but primarily what he felt that he would have said had he been given the opportunity to answer his accusers at such length. This is not to say that nothing in John stems from the historical Jesus, but simply that the discrepancies between John and the Synoptics necessitate caution, and that we cannot rely on John to present the words of the historical Jesus, in particular when he differs from other sources that have multiple attestation and are generally considered by historians to be more reliable. This does not involve excessive scepticism: it is to do nothing more than reassert what is in itself a Biblical principle: one witness on his or her own does not have the same value that two or three witnesses have in proving a case!

But let us not be overly pessimistic in our conclusions either! Let me quote John Robinson at length:

John is still concerned with what Jesus is really saying and meaning, and the words, like the actions, can be understood at very different levels. Yet he does not simply set them down straight, and then comment upon them - allowing the sayings and their interpretation to stand side by side, with the raw material presented in its untreated state. Rather, it is worked up; the interpretation is thoroughly assimilated and integrated. But the same is after all true in different degrees with the Synoptists. For they too are interpreting the words and works of Jesus in the light of the one whom they have discovered him to be within the life-setting of their communities. One may freely grant that how they represent Jesus as speaking may be *more* like how he would have been heard if one had had a tape recorder around. That is to say, by the criterion of verisimilitude, as he was to be encountered 'in the flesh', their record may be truer to life. But in terms of what he was really saying, this may not be the case...The Johannine Christ is the Jesus John saw. No one else may have seen him thus. It is a highly personal portrait. The vocabulary, the perspective, the interpretation are distinctively and recognizably his. Yet the colouration

may not be purely subjective (John A. T. Robinson, *The Priority of John*, pp.298-9).

In order to explain the distinctive features of John's Gospel we have noted in the preceding section, the two main factors that are regularly appealed to are the author of the Gospel, and the distinctive context in which he wrote. It is to a consideration of these two issues that we now turn.

Author and Context

To assume that the traditional title of this work gives us an adequate answer to the question I have just posed is extremely naïve. Modern Biblical scholarship has shown over the past few centuries that the traditional authorship of a number of Biblical books simply cannot be taken for granted, without a great deal of further examination and discussion of the issue. This is nowhere more true than in relation to John's Gospel. For those approaching this book without the presupposition that the Church's traditions regarding authorship are accurate (that is, hopefully, all Protestants and most other modern readers!), the question becomes "Why should one attribute this book to a particular Galilean fisherman who followed Jesus, rather than to any other of the large number of followers that he had?" If one jettisons Church tradition as providing authoritative answers to this question, then one is essentially left only with only the internal evidence within the Gospel itself. And within the Gospel the 'Beloved Disciple', the author or source of information for the Fourth Gospel, remains anonymous (unless of course John 11:3 tells us who he is). We may thus set aside the traditional question of authorship, and focus instead on the author inasmuch as he can be known from the hints given within the book he wrote.

But at least as interesting and important as the issue of the author is the *context* in which he wrote. Because, as one quickly discovers when reading John, the context in which the Gospel was written appears to have had a very profound influence in shaping the content of the Gospel. It is thus more important in John's Gospel than in any other New Testament book to learn to read it on *two levels*. On the one hand, John's story claims to be about a historical figure, Jesus, who lived some decades earlier. On the other hand, this claim cannot be taken at face value, since in John one finds that Jesus, John the Baptist, and the narrator all speak in the same way, a way that bears close resemblance also to the language, expressions, and turns of phrase in the Johannine Epistles. So it is clear that, at the very least, the author has passed any traditional material he has inherited through the lens of his own unique perspective and language. In fact, those who know the Gospel of John well should not be surprised to find that a voice other than that of the 'historical

Jesus' is to be found in it. The author gives a great deal of attention to the role of the *Paraclete*, the 'other comforter', the Spirit of Truth who will reveal things that Jesus could not say while physically present with the disciples on earth (cf. John 16:12-13).

A number of scholars have focused attention on the unique perspective of the Fourth Gospel's author as the explanation of this work's distinctive features, and clearly there is some truth in this. Explanations along these lines (as proposed by authors like John Robinson and Martin Hengel) focus on the unique perspective that the Fourth Evangelist had, much as Plato and Xenophon had different perspectives on the work of Socrates. But however much this may be part of the explanation of the Fourth Gospel's distinctiveness, it quickly becomes obvious that *all four Gospels* had unique authors, and so while this author's unique perspective and style are important, they are not the only factors that interest us in looking for an explanation of why John is unique. When we read or study any piece of writing, if we ask *why* the author wrote what he or she did, we are usually looking for something beyond the level of 'He wrote what he did because he was Isaac Asimov and not John Grisham' or 'because he was Victor Hugo and not William Shakespeare'. In the same way, we are unlikely to be satisfied with an answer that says that John wrote what he did, as he did, because he was not Matthew, Mark or Luke. When we ask the question 'Why?', we are interested not just in the level of the individual author, as important as that may be, but also in the level of *context*. What factors, what social setting, what contemporary problems and issues, what influences led him to write as he did?

An influential figure in sparking off the contemporary interest in the *history of the Johannine community* as a key to understanding the Fourth Gospel is J. L. Martyn. He asks towards the beginning of his trend-setting study, "May one sense even in [the Fourth Gospel's] exalted cadences the voice of a Christian theologian who writes *in response to contemporary events and issues* which concern, or should concern, all members of the Christian community in which he lives?" Martyn answers this question in the affirmative, and thus emphasizes that "when we read the Fourth Gospel, we are listening both to tradition and to a new and unique interpretation of that tradition" (J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 1979, pp.18-19). Martyn is suggesting that attention to the context in which John wrote, and the needs of the church for which he wrote, can illuminate the question of why the Evangelist wrote as he did. Martyn's work was pioneering in calling for a reading of John's Gospel on two levels. As we go on to examine the distinctive features of the Fourth Gospel's *theology*, it will be crucial to have in mind some information about the Christian community

that produced this Gospel and about the context in which they lived and wrote and formulated their theology.

The Context of John's Gospel

Anyone who reads John's Gospel carefully will notice that the opponents of Jesus are presented and referred to somewhat differently than in the Synoptic Gospels. Where in the Synoptics one finds references to scribes and Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians, in John the most common way of referring to Jesus' opponents and dialogue partners is 'the Jews', and occasionally 'the Pharisees'. The use of the phrase 'the Jews' to denote Jesus' opponents is of particular interest for a number of reasons, not least of which is the obvious fact that Jesus and his disciples *are themselves also very clearly Jewish*. The author of this Gospel is not unaware of this, and in the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John chapter 4, not only does the woman refer to Jesus as 'a Jew' (cf. John 4:9,20), but also Jesus himself is presented as affirming that 'salvation is of the Jews' (4:22). And so I would like to spend a few moments looking at this aspect of the Fourth Gospel, both because of the fact that these references to 'the Jews' have played a role in justifying anti-Semitism in the past, which makes it important that we understand them correctly, and also because these references are crucial clues concerning the context in which John wrote.

So what has led the author to refer to Jesus' opponents in the manner that he does, as 'the Jews'? The answer of most scholars is that John is reflecting the situation in his own time. On the one hand, after the destruction of the Temple in the year 70 CE, the Pharisees grew in prominence and influence, whereas other Jewish movements and sectarian groups slowly died out. This is at least one of the reasons why John no longer mentions other groups like the Sadducees - they either no longer existed or had no real influence in his time and his area. On the other hand, the references to 'the Jews' also need to be understood in terms of the growing influence of Pharisaic Judaism, since this meant that Judaism could be referred to in much more generalized terms than would have been appropriate in the pre-70 period.

Yet these considerations are not sufficient in and of themselves to explain many of the Johannine references to 'the Jews'. For example, what are we to make of John's statement in John 7:12-13, that at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem the crowds discussed about Jesus, and yet we are told that "no one spoke about him openly, *for fear of the Jews*"? What can it possibly mean to say that crowds of Jews in Jerusalem discussed about the Jewish man Jesus and yet were afraid of 'the Jews'? Well, perhaps an illustration from the way we

sometimes speak in English will be helpful. I lived in Romania for 3 years. I could say that "If I had applied for Romanian citizenship, *the Americans* would have taken my passport away". Now obviously I am not denying that I myself am an American by speaking this way. Nor do I mean that random Americans would start coming up to me on the street and try to search my pockets for my passport. It is clear from the context that what I really mean by 'the Americans' in this context is 'the American *authorities*', the American government. In John, the phrase 'the Jews' often refers to the Jewish authorities, representing the position of certain Jewish authorities in John's own time. In other instances, it is shorthand for 'the unbelieving Jews', that is, the Jewish people spoken of in generalizing terms in light of the fact that most Jews did not accept Christian claims about Jesus. Once again, in using the phrase in this way, John has one eye on the situation in his own time and context.

I feel it is extremely important to recognize that John is not writing as a Gentile Christian about the Jews as a race. He is writing as a Jewish-Christian and as the leader of a Jewish-Christian community about other Jews who either do not believe in Jesus or have not yet made up their minds. There is thus no sense in which his language, even at its most fiery, should be regarded as anti-Semitic. (There is insufficient space here to deal with the issue of the reference in John 8 to 'the Jews' as children of the Devil. The most important thing to remember is that this is language typical of Jewish sectarianism in this period: the Essenes at Qumran call their opponents (the rest of Judaism!) 'sons of Beliar'. Note also that in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus calls Peter not even 'a son of Satan' but simply 'Satan'!) This Christian (or perhaps I should say Messianic Jewish?) community has experienced exclusion from the synagogue, and is thus making its claims over against the majority in the Jewish community, who have essentially defined these Christians out of their definition of Judaism. It is important to understand these points, so as to counteract the misuse to which texts like these have been put in the history of Christian anti-Semitism. John is not writing as a non-Jew about 'the Jews'. He is writing as a Jewish Christian who feels he and his community have been wrongly 'defined out' of the definition of Judaism by others who have no right to do so, and thus refers to his opponents - perhaps with a touch of irony - as 'the Jews'.

This phrase 'the Jews' and the way it is used in John are thus important in terms of helping us to understand the Fourth Gospel in its original context. The debates between the Johannine Jesus and 'the Jews', and the references to followers of Jesus being thrown out of the synagogue, are features that are unique to John. Most if not all scholars agree that these debates actually reflect debates that were going on in John's time between a group of Christians of Jewish origin on the one hand, and the leaders of the synagogue of which they

used to be a part on the other. John's Gospel thus seems to fit the type of a religious sect that is either in the process of, or has recently broken off from, its parent religion. By looking at the indications we are given in the Gospel itself about the context in which the Gospel was written, we are given a picture of one or more Jewish-Christian communities involved in an intense debate with their 'parent community' - that is, the Jewish community of which they had once been a part, but in which they now no longer feel welcome. The Gospel of John represents (among other things) this group's attempt to justify its own existence by arguing its case over against the objections and criticisms raised by the synagogue leaders. The debates between Jesus and 'the Jews' in John's Gospel may therefore be taken to reflect debates going on in John's own time. The focus of the debates narrated in the Fourth Gospel is almost exclusively Christology. Jesus is accused of 'making himself equal to God' and of 'making himself God' (John 5:18; 10:33). At one point they attempt to kill him by throwing stones at him, because he said 'Before Abraham was, I am' (8:58). Likewise in John 19:7 the Jews tell Pilate that according to their Law Jesus must die, because he 'made himself the Son of God'. And thus, since the focus of the conflict with these synagogue leaders, and the focus of this author's arguments, have to do with Christology, and so let us now turn our attention to John's distinctive presentation of who Jesus is.

In the Beginning was the Word

The Logos or Word is not a common feature in the Christology of John's Gospel, but it has an importance that is far greater than can be determined simply by counting the number of occurrences. By placing the prologue (John 1:1-18) that describes Jesus as the Word become flesh at the beginning of his Gospel, it becomes the lens through which the rest of the Gospel is read. Many have emphasized that the author intends the whole story of Jesus to be read through the lens of and in the light of the prologue. So it is important that we understand the prologue, both its background and its interpretation.

It was long assumed that the background to John's use of Logos is to be found in Greek philosophy, and if there is any Jewish influence at all, it derives from Hellenistic Jews such as Philo, who have sought to explain Judaism in terms of Greek philosophy. However, it is important to ask as well why the concept of the Logos appealed so much to Philo, or to John, or to any Jewish monotheist. In fact, just as scholarship has shown that one cannot draw a hard and fast line between 'Judaism' and 'Hellenism' as hermetically-sealed compartments, so we shall see that, even if the Logos concept in John ultimately derives from the world of Greek philosophy, John inherited it already filtered through the lens of earlier Jewish use and adaptation of the concept.

John's prologue's Logos Christology is perhaps the NT passage which had the greatest affect on the direction that theology and particularly Christology took in the subsequent centuries, since it gives a clear assertion of the pre-existence, divinity, and of the real incarnation of the Logos as Jesus Christ. Anyone familiar with the OT will know that the phrase 'the word of God', or more often 'the word of Yahweh', was very common (cf. Ps.33:6; 107:20; 147:15,18; Isa.9:8; 55:10f; Wisd.18:14-16). The verses noted above are those most usually quoted by those who argue that the 'word of God' was something of an independent hypostasis in the OT, but this assertion is questionable, since there are a greater number of passages which have similar language, but which clearly are using idiomatic language to emphasize their point (e.g. Num.22:38; Jer.23:29). J. D. G. Dunn (*Christology in the Making*, p.218) agrees with Bultmann's assertion that "*God's Word is God* insofar as he calls men into being...God's Word is God's act...the manifestation of his power, the real manifestation of God. It is God present, the *praesens numen*". G. F. Moore (quoted *ibid*, p.219) writes of Wisd.18:15f: "It is an error to see in such personifications an approach to personalization. Nowhere either in the Bible or in the extra-canonical literature of the Jews is the word of God a personal agent or on the way to become such". Dunn (*ibid*) likewise cites Wisd.9:1-2,17 as evidence that in the OT 'Spirit', 'Word' and 'Wisdom' were "simply variant ways of speaking of the creative, revelatory or redemptive act of God" (cf. also Ps.33:6; 147:18; Pr.3:19). Dunn therefore concludes that barring Philo, there does not seem to have been in pre-Christian Judaism such speculation about or personalization of the Word or Wisdom of God.

In the extant writings of Philo, we can see that Logos was an important term, since it appears 1400 times. At first there would appear to be no disputing that the Logos does appear as a distinct being from God. The following passages are important:

"To his Word, his chief messenger, highest in age and honor, the Father of all has given the special prerogative, to stand on the border and separate the creature from the Creator. This same word both pleads with the immortal as suppliant for afflicted mortality and acts as ambassador of the ruler to the subject" (*Heres.2-5*).

"...of necessity was the Logos appointed as judge and mediator, who is called 'angel'" (*Qu.Ex.II.13*).

"The incorporeal world is set off and separated from the visible one by the mediating Logos as by a veil" (*Qu.Ex.II.94*).

"...follow the guidance of that reason (logos) which is the interpreter and prophet of God" (*Immut.138*).

"This hallowed flock (the heavenly bodies) he leads in accordance with right and law, setting over it his true Word and firstborn Son, who shall take upon him its government like some viceroy of a great king" (*Agr.51*).

"...God's firstborn, the Word, who holds the eldership among the angels, their ruler as it were..." (*Conf.146*).

"Nothing mortal can be made in the likeness of the most high One and Father of the universe, but only in that of the second God, who is his Logos" (*Qu.Gen.II.62*).

Philo adopted much from Platonism, which believed that there was a real world, of ideas and forms, which is perfect, and of which our world is just a shadow or copy. His adaptation of platonic thought was aided by Ex.25:40:

"...no actual tabernacle or altar is meant (Lev.10:8-10), that is the visible objects fashioned from lifeless and perishable material, but those invisible conceptions perceived only by the mind, of which the others are copies open to our senses" (*Ebr.132*).

From Stoicism, Philo derives his talk of divine reason (logos) immanent in the world, permeating all things & present also in man, the seminal logos, so that man's highest good is to live in accordance of this divine reason. Yet these Platonic and Stoic ideas do not remain unchanged in Philo's scheme, which has Jewish roots. The 'ideas' of Platonism are understood as thoughts in the mind of *God*; and the Stoic concepts are reshaped even further, since for the Stoic the Logos is something material, and the system tends towards pantheism. The term *logos* has two aspects, 'thought, reason' and 'speech, utterance', the unexpressed thought within the mind, and the thought expressed in words. Yet these two shades of meaning often overlap, the two meanings running into each other.

For Philo, God is further removed from man and the physical universe than the realm of ideas, and thus is unknowable even to the purest intellect, although God has left a 'shadow' of himself in his creation, and also God is knowable in the sense that God is the archetype of the Logos. As Philo writes of the Logos, "...that same Word, by which he made the universe, is that by which God draws the perfect man from things earthly to himself" (*Sac.*8). The Logos for Philo is what is knowable of God, although in truth God himself is unknowable. From the way Philo expresses himself, it is not always clear whether for Philo the Logos is something separate from God, or only a way of speaking of what is knowable of God, much as the corona is what is visible of the sun, and yet the corona is neither a distinct entity from the sun, nor the sun in its entirety (Dunn, *op.cit.*, p.226). The Logos of God is God in his self-revelation. And there is, as we shall see later, a sense in which Philo seems quite happy to give a 'both/and' (or 'neither/nor') answer to these sorts of questions.

It should be noted that outside of Johannine writings, the phrase 'the Word of God' seems to have much the same sense as in the Hebrew Bible (cf. 1 Pet.1:24f; Heb.4:12f; 1 Tim.4:5; 2 Tim.2:9; etc.). It is only in John that the phrase takes on this specialized sense. Yet nothing in John's prologue prior to 1:14 would have sounded terribly odd or unfamiliar to a Hellenistic Jew familiar with such speculations as found in Philo. Yet John, if he uses Philo's terminology, is asserting that the Logos, the 'appearing God', is not any other God than God himself. The manifestation of God has become a human being. Building on the very Jewish concept that 'no one has ever seen God', John "makes the very Philonic assertion that the Logos is both as close to God as man can conceive or perceive, and reveals as much of God to man as is possible to be revealed...The point is, however, that it is not the Philonic incorporeal Logos that provides the bridge to and from God, but the man Jesus Christ" (Dunn, *op.cit.*, pp.243f). As we can see from Philo's language, other terms which John used link up with the same thought (e.g. firstborn Son), but John in any case does not use 'Logos' after Jn.1:14, because the Logos has really taken on flesh, and now *is* the human person Jesus. (We can see the importance of John's formulation for later thought: if Christ is the Logos (in Philo's terms, *qeoc* rather than *o qeoc*), then modalism is excluded, and if the Logos *became* the man Christ Jesus, rather than just speaking through him, then adoptionism is excluded). The thought world demonstrated in the writings of Philo is probably the most significant one in understanding the background of Johannine use.

Dunn writes (*Christology*, p.243) of John's prologue: "Prior to v.14 we are in the same realm as pre-Christian talk of Wisdom and Logos, the same language and ideas that we find in the Wisdom tradition and in Philo, where, as we have seen, we are dealing with personifications rather than persons, personified actions of

God rather than an individual divine being as such. The point is obscured by the fact that we have to translate the masculine Logos as 'he' throughout the poem. But if we translated *logos* as 'God's utterance' instead, it would become clearer that the poem did not necessarily intend the Logos in vv.1-13 to be thought of as a personal divine being. In other words, the revolutionary significance of v.14 may well be that it marks *not only the transition in the thought of the poem from pre-existence to incarnation, but also the transition from impersonal personification to actual person*".

There is a quote from Augustine's *Confessions*, which can show how John's conception of the Logos related to that in Hellenistic philosophy:

In them (some of the books of the Platonists) I read - not, of course, word for word, though the sense was the same and it was supported by all kinds of different arguments - that 'at the beginning of time the Word already was; and God had the Word abiding with him, and the Word was God...And the light shines in the darkness, a darkness which was not able to master it'. I read to that the soul of man, although it 'bears witness to the light, is not the light'. But the Word, who is himself God, 'is the true light, which enlightens every soul born into the world. He, through whom the world was made, was in the world, and the world treated him as a stranger'. But I did not find it written in those books that "he came to what was his own, and they who were his own gave him no welcome. But all those who did welcome him he empowered to become children of God, all those who believe in his name'. In the same books I also read of the Word, God, that his 'birth came not from human stock, not from nature's will or man's, but from God'. But I did not read in them that 'the Word was made flesh and came to dwell among us'.

Yet in order to get behind John's and or Philo's thought, it is also important to look at what there is in Jewish writings less influenced by Hellenistic thought which could bridge the seemingly large gap between OT use of the phrase and Philo's use. Another question that is regularly asked is: How did a religion of strict monotheism like Judaism ever come to find such talk acceptable? In the OT the 'Word of God' is God's will or action towards his people, revealed to his people. What is the intermediate stage between this early conception, and the concepts found in Philo and John? What are we to make of the references to concepts like *Memra* in the Targums, Aramaic paraphrases/expansions of Scripture? It is our view that John's Christology would not have been a problem for Jewish monotheists: Jewish opponents of this Christian community objected to various things being said *about Jesus*, but the problem was not so much what was said as *who these things were said about*. This will hopefully become clearer in the next section.

John's Christology and Jewish Monotheism

I. *The Importance of the Question*

The focus of this section – namely, how and whether John's Gospel fits with Jewish monotheism, is a question that seems to be of much interest to many people in different fields: not only New Testament scholars, but also systematic theologians, those engaged in inter-religious dialogue, and probably many others. When Christians meet with Jews and Muslims, the oneness of God is often a point of contention: although Christians claim to be monotheists, what they call monotheism looks quite different from what other religions call monotheism. It is usually to John's Gospel that Christians look when they want to understand whether they are closer to Jews and Muslims who believe in one God, or to Hindus who believe in a variety of divine beings.

Closely related to the question which we have posed is the question of the relationship between the doctrines which are regarded as *orthodox* by Christians throughout the world, in particular the doctrine of the Trinity, and the teaching and self-understanding of Jesus himself. For most Christians, belief in the Trinity is fundamental, whereas in the eyes of some people today - including a number of New Testament scholars! - this doctrine is an aberration, a departure from the monotheism of Jesus and his first followers, one which was perhaps made under the influence of pagan converts coming into the church (So especially Maurice Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, Cambridge: James Clarke, 1991; *idem.*, *Is John's Gospel True?*, London: Routledge, 1996). The question of whether the author of the Fourth Gospel *perverted* Christian beliefs or *preserved* them is thus at least a question of interest, and very probably a question of some urgency.

In answer to the question posed, I will argue that, in terms of Jewish monotheism *as it existed in the first century*, John was completely, undeniably and without reservations a monotheist.

II. *Johannine Monotheism: The Evidence*

The aim of this section is therefore to study John's Gospel in comparison with the writings of some of his Jewish contemporaries, to evaluate to what extent John's view of Jesus would have been acceptable within the context of first-century Jewish monotheism. (In our study we shall follow the methodology recommended by Larry Hurtado: rather than defining monotheism in an *a priori* and abstract way, we intend to compare John's Gospel to other Jewish writings whose authors would have considered themselves to be monotheists. Cf. Larry

W. Hurtado, "What Do We Mean by 'First-Century Jewish Monotheism'?" *SBL 1993 Seminar Papers*, (ed. David Lull; Atlanta: Scholars, 1993) 348-368.)

A. *The Prologue (1:1-18)*

The best place to begin is usually at the beginning, and so in turning to John we may look first of all at the prologue, the hymn-like passage found in John 1:1-18, which we have looked at in a more general way above. The opening line, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God", is obviously of crucial importance for answering the question we have raised concerning the extent to which the author of John's Gospel was a monotheist, and to which his portrait of Christ may rightly be said to be monotheistic. How do such assertions as those made in the prologue compare to what we find in other Jewish sources?

In first-century Judaism, the one true God was distinguished from others in that he was uncreated, whereas all other beings had come into existence. For the Jewish philosopher Philo, as for many philosophers of the time, God's Word or Logos bridged the gap between God and creation. In fact, Philo describes the Word as "neither uncreated...nor created" (*Quis Her.* 206). This may sound like gibberish to us today, but for Philo, and probably for many others in his time, it made sense in terms of their worldview. The Word was 'part' of God, since it existed within him before it came forth, and yet it was distinct from God and could come into contact with the material world. The Word bridged the gap between the transcendent God and the creation. The existence of this 'bridge' between God and creation means that, although certain religious *practices*, such as cultic worship, distinguished Israel's one God from all other beings, no clear separation was made, no hard and fast dividing line was drawn, between God and creation. A number of experts are convinced that in the first century Jews and Christians had not yet formulated a clear doctrine of *creation out of nothing*. On this view, God was believed to have created out of 'non-being', but that 'non-being' was understood as formlessness, shapelessness, chaos, the origin of which was not (for whatever reason) the subject of speculation and reflection. This was the view of the world and of creation prevalent in the ancient world, and there is no unambiguous evidence that Jews or Christians moved away from it prior to the second or third century. This is not to say that they were *opposed* to such a view, but simply that it appears that the issues which necessitated the definition of this doctrine had not yet arisen. (See further on this subject Gerhard May, *Creatio ex Nihilo* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994) 25; Peter Hayman, "Monotheism - A Misused Word in Jewish Studies?" *JJS* 42 (1991) 3-4; Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981) 75-77; Francis Young, "Christology and Creation: Towards an Hermeneutic of Patristic

Christology”, in *The Myriad Christ*, Leuven: Peeters, 2002, pp.191-205; Rowan Williams, *Arius. Heresy and Tradition* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1987. See also Wisdom of Solomon 11:17). Perhaps many Jews (and Christians) may have thought of God as creating *eternally*, so that there was no question that the universe’s existence was ultimately dependent on God. Cf. e.g. Philo, *Op.Mund.* 7,13,18ff. On this subject see also N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, London: SPCK, 1992, p.248-259.

At any rate, there is much evidence to suggest that the Word or Logos was the only ‘dividing line’ or ‘boundary marker’ between God and creation, but the edges were blurred slightly on both sides, since the Word was “neither created nor uncreated”, being both the Word of God himself, and yet also being described as if a separate being. One might say that the boundary between God and creation in first century Judaism was more like a river than a wall: the exact edges of the boundary were not clearly defined, but nonetheless the existence of the boundary was not in question. There was thus, in the mind of first century Jews, what might be called a ‘hierarchy of being’, with God on top, then his Word or Wisdom or powers, then angels and heavenly beings, then humans, lions, slugs, mosquitoes, and whatever else, but without an absolute dividing line being drawn to distinguish God from creation. Yet whatever ambiguity the existence of various personified divine attributes and other such figures may create for us today, first century Jews affirmed that there was one God who was above all, the creator of all, who was distinguished from other beings in being *alone worthy of worship* and in being *the sole ruler of all things*, whose will ultimately is always realized (cf. Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified*, Carlisle: Paternoster, pp.10-13). This was not felt to be in contradiction with belief in ‘intermediary’ figures of various types.

We should immediately be struck with the paradox that John asserts: he says both that the Word was *with* God and that the Word *was* God. This paradox is comparable to what Philo asserts concerning the Word: “neither uncreated nor created”. This understanding of the Word is crucial to the role that the Word fulfils, as the one through whom the creation of all things takes place. God’s transcendence was so emphasized in Hellenistic thought that it was felt to be inappropriate to suggest that God created directly, or came directly into contact with the material world. The idea of the *Logos* thus made it possible both to regard God as creator, and at the same time to maintain his transcendence.

Thus Philo and John both speak of the Word as mediator of creation, as one who is part of the reality of God and yet distinct from and subordinate to God. Both refer to the Word as ‘God’, and yet both emphasize that the Logos is subordinate in some sense to the one true God who is above all. Philo makes this

point by referring to the Word as a ‘second God’, while John makes this point by portraying Jesus as calling the Father “the only true God” in John 17:3. For both, then, the Word is an expression of the reality of God himself, and yet distinct from and subordinate to God, in a way that can only be described as *paradoxical*. Yet in spite of this paradox, it is clear that if Philo fits our portrait of what a first-century Jewish monotheist looks like, then so also does John: both held that there was one God above all who was uniquely worthy of worship, who created all things through his Word. There is unambiguous evidence that Philo understood himself to be a monotheist: he writes, “Let us, then, engrave deep in our hearts this as the first and most sacred of commandments, to acknowledge and honor one God who is above all, and let the idea that gods are many never reach the ears of the man whose rule of life is to seek for truth in purity and goodness” (*Decal.* 65). This comes from the pen of the same Philo who speaks of the Word as a ‘second God’! It thus becomes clear that both Philo and John - and many other Jews of their time - felt that belief in one God who is above all is compatible with belief in a second figure who reveals and represents God. John’s belief was different from Philo’s in that he identified this Word with Jesus, but on the question of the oneness of God, it appears that they would have both agreed.

B. *‘Making Himself (Equal to) God’ (John 5 and 10)*

A second passage of key importance for understanding Johannine Christology and the way John understood the relationship between Jesus and God is chapter 5 of the Gospel. There Jesus is depicted as healing a paralyzed man on the Sabbath. The Jewish authorities object to this, and the Johannine Jesus justifies his action by saying: “My Father is always at work even until this very day, and I too am working” (John 5:17). To understand this response, we need to know that Jewish tradition claimed that God continued to work even on the Sabbath, since it was clear that even on Saturdays someone was busy upholding the universe. This was explained in various ways by Philo and by the later rabbis, but it is clear that already in the first century it was thought that God worked on the Sabbath, and that this was a prerogative of God alone. For Jesus to claim to do what God alone does was for this reason understood as a claim to be ‘equal to God.’

When we read this passage, we might be tempted to backtrack on the conclusion we reached when looking at the prologue: After all, if John had not abandoned monotheism, what was all this fuss and fighting about? If John had believed in one God, why was it necessary for him to defend himself against the accusation that Jesus had ‘made himself equal to God’?

In order to understand this, we need to understand that Jesus - and also the heavenly Word - were understood in terms of what we may call 'agency': these figures, like the Old Testament prophets, angels and many others, were 'agents' of God. Now when we use this term we don't mean that they sold houses for God or booked gigs for God to perform at local clubs on Saturday nights. When we speak of 'agency' we are speaking of what in Greek would have been called 'apostleship' - the situation in which someone is sent to represent someone else. In the days before mobile phones, fax machines, the internet and telecommunications, this was an essential part of life. If a king wanted to make peace with another nation, he did not go in person - or at least not in the first instance - but sent his ambassador. When a wealthy person wanted to arrange a property purchase or sale in another region, he sent a representative. When God wanted to address his people, he sent a prophet or an angel. Agency was an important part of everyday life in the ancient world. (On the concept of agency see further Peder Borgen, "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel," *The Interpretation of John* (ed. John Ashton; London: SPCK, 1986) 67-78; A. E. Harvey, "Christ as Agent" *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament* (ed. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright; Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 239-250; Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord* (London: SCM, 1988); also Jan-A. Böhner, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg im 4. Evangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1977), *passim*. It may perhaps be helpful to some to mention here that the term 'agent', like the term 'angel' which is applied often to Jesus/the Logos in early Christian (and Jewish) writings, has to do with function and does not have really have ontological issues in view).

Now there were certain basic rules or assumptions connected with agency in the ancient world. The most basic of all was that, in the words of later Jewish rabbis: "The one sent is like the one who sent him" (cf. *Mek.Ex.* 12:3,6; *m. Ber.* 5:5). Or, in words which are probably better known to those of us familiar with the New Testament, "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives not me but the one who sent me" (Matt. 10:40). These are words which the Gospels record Jesus as saying to his apostles, and 'apostle' is simply the Greek word for 'one who is sent', an 'agent.' When someone sent an agent, the agent was given the full authority of the sender to speak and act on his behalf. If the agent made an agreement, it was completely binding, as if the person who sent him had made it in person. Conversely, if someone rejected an agent he rejected the one who sent him. The agent was thus functionally *equal* or *equivalent* to the one who sent him, precisely because he was subordinate and obedient to, and submitted to the will of, him who sent him.

This helps us to understand what is at issue in John 5. The issue is not whether there is really only one God - John affirms explicitly that he believes that

there is only one true God. Rather the debate centers around Jesus' *relationship* to the one God. Jesus claims to do what God does. If he is God's appointed agent, then there is no reason to regard this as illegitimate: it would not be the first time that God appointed one of his agents to act or speak on his behalf, to proclaim his message and do his works. However, 'the Jews' as they are presented in the Gospel of John do not recognize Jesus as one who has been appointed by God. They thus accuse him of "*making himself* equal to God." That is to say, the problem is not 'equality with God' *in and of itself*, but whether Jesus acts in this way as God's agent. The issue is whether Jesus has been sent by God and is obedient to God, or whether he is a rebellious, glory-seeking upstart who claims divine prerogatives for himself. 'The Jews' accuse Jesus of *making himself* equal to God - that is to say, they accuse him of *putting himself* on the level of God, by claiming to do what God does when he has not in fact been appointed by God. They thus feel that Jesus has committed blasphemy: by making these claims, he is felt to have insulted God. (On this subject see further my article, "A Rebellious Son? Hugo Odeberg and the Interpretation of John 5.18", *NTS* 44 (1998) 470-473. The accusations of 'blasphemy' and of Jesus 'making himself (equal to) God' in John closely resemble the Synoptic tradition found in Mark 2:5-7. In Mark, some objected to Jesus claiming to do what God does, either because they felt this was something which God would not delegate to an agent, or because they did not accept that Jesus is God's appointed agent. In John we have evidence of increased controversy over *the same issues that were sticking points between Christian and non-Christian Jews from the very beginning*).

How is Jesus portrayed as responding to this charge? He adamantly denies it. Listen to the words which are used: "The Son can do nothing of himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing...By myself I can do nothing...I seek not to please myself but him who sent me" (John 5:19,30). Jesus is emphatically said to be God's obedient Son and agent. In the ancient near east, the eldest son was usually the principle agent of his father. A son was also expected to learn his father's trade, watching him carefully and learning to imitate his Father. John has this in mind when he uses this type of language to justify the actions and claims of Jesus: Jesus does what God does, and as one who shares in a Father-Son relationship with God, that is precisely what should be expected. Only if Jesus were a *disobedient* son would he not do what he sees his Father doing. There is thus no problem of monotheism in John 5. The issue is about whether Jesus is *putting himself* on a par with God, seeking his own glory in a way that detracts from the glory and honour due to God alone. John emphasizes that Jesus is in fact God's appointed agent, and because this is the case there is nothing illegitimate about his behaviour: he does what God does not as one who is rebelling against the divine authority by setting himself up as a rival to the unique honor and glory of God, but as God's obedient Son and agent whom he sent into the world.

The same applies to John 10:33, where the same sort of language is used: Jesus is accused of “*making himself* God.” This would, in the view of his opponents, be blasphemy, precisely because they regard Jesus as a rebellious upstart rather than as an appointed agent. Other figures had at times sought to claim divine prerogatives without being appointed by God: Adam grasped at equality with God; the king of Babylon in Isaiah’s time was accused of blasphemy for exalting himself. Perhaps most relevant for John 10 is the figure of Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus was the king of Syria in the period when Israel was under the dominion of Syria. He claimed to be ‘god manifest,’ and for various reasons which we can not go into now he outlawed the observance of the Jewish law and began a severe persecution of the Jewish people. The dialogue in John 10 is set at the feast of Dedication or Hanukkah, which celebrated the rededication of the temple after it had been desecrated by Antiochus. It is interesting to note that the books of the Maccabees, which describe the desecration of the temple and its subsequent rededication, contain more than a third of all the occurrences of the word ‘blasphemy’ in the Greek Old Testament, which appears to have been the version that John knew and used. Most striking of all is 2 Maccabees 9:12, where Antiochus Epiphanes is presented as repenting on his death bed, and asserting that “no mortal should think that he is *equal to God*,” a phrase very reminiscent of the language used in John 10, and also in John 5:18. The issue once again is thus whether Jesus is a glory-seeking rebel against God’s authority like Antiochus, or rather an obedient agent who does the will of him who sent him. Whether or not there is one God who is uniquely worthy of honor is not at issue: the issue is Jesus’ relationship to that one true God.

C. ‘I AM’ (John 8)

Finally, we may consider the dialogue with Jewish opponents depicted in John chapter 8. This part of John is famous because it presents Jesus as using the phrase ‘I am’ absolutely - Here (and in one or two other places in John), Jesus does not say “I am such and such” (for example, “I am the good shepherd” or “I am the light of the world”), but rather simply says “I am.” Most scholars think that this use of ‘I am’ reflects the occurrence of this phrase in the Septuagint version of Isaiah as a name for God. This in turn appears to have been based on an interpretation of the name ‘Yahweh’ revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14-15. So, even if everything we have said so far is true, someone will probably ask: surely when Jesus is presented as saying ‘I am’ the meaning is ‘I am Yahweh,’ and if that is the case then Jesus is clearly claiming to be none other than the God revealed in the Old Testament, and is thus redefining monotheism in a radical way.

This logic would be convincing except for one crucial problem. As C. K. Barrett has rightly pointed out, it is simply intolerable to suggest that John presents Jesus as saying “I am Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament, and as such I do exactly what I am told”. Yet the Johannine Jesus says in John 8:28: “When you have ‘lifted up’ (that is to say, “When you have crucified”) the Son of Man, then you will know that *I am, and that I do nothing of myself*, but speak *just what the Father has taught me*.” Thus, whereas the king of Babylon is accused in Isa.47:8 of blasphemously claiming “I am, and there is no other,” Jesus claims something very different: “I am, and I do nothing of myself, but only the will of him who sent me.” Jesus’ use of ‘I am’ thus appears to be connected with him being the agent who has been sent by God, and there are contemporary Jewish writings which can help use to understand a little bit of what is going on here.

In a first century Jewish writing entitled *The Apocalypse of Abraham*, Abraham is described as being granted a visit to heaven. Sent to guide him on his heavenly visit is an angel, who identifies himself as “Yahoel.” The name Yahoel is made up of the two main names for God in the Old Testament, “Yah” or “Yahweh” and “El.” The angel thus has the same name as God. This is not because that angel is really God himself or is confused with God. No; it is because God has given his name to the angel in order to empower him. This is explicitly stated in the book itself (10:3,8). This is thus one of a number of examples from Jewish thought of God’s agent being given God’s name in order to empower him for his mission. In later times, the Samaritans made much the same sort of claims for Moses. The early Christians applied these ideas to Jesus. The clearest example of this is in the quotation from an early Christian hymn preserved in Paul’s letter to the Philippians (2:6-11), which says Jesus “humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross; Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and *gave him the name that is above every name*, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is *Lord*, to the glory of God the Father.” *Lord* here is thought of as God’s name, since the name “Yahweh” was for the most part not actually pronounced by Jews in this period, and in the Septuagint translation they translated the Hebrew name of God with the Greek word for Lord (*kyrios*). This practice has been followed by most modern versions of the Bible, which is why the name “Yahweh” which occurs so frequently throughout the Jewish Scriptures is not found in them: it has been replaced by LORD (usually in capital letters). At any rate, here once again we see Jesus exalted to heaven to a place second only to God himself, and given God’s very own name. This was a way that, in this period of Jewish history, God was believed to honor and empower his agents, and it is a continuation and development of this idea that is found in John. This is particularly clear in John 17:11-12, where Jesus prays for his disciples saying, “Father, protect them by the

power of your name - the name you gave me - so that they may be one as we are one” (Don Carson regards those MSS which state that the Father gave a name to Jesus as more reliable (*Gospel According to John*, Leicester: IVP, 1991, p.562), as does George Beasley-Murray (*John*, Dallas: Word, 1987, p.293). Likewise Leon Morris accepts this as the original reading, although without explanation (*The Gospel According to John*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971, p.728). The name ‘I am’ which Jesus bears is the Father’s name, and the Father gave it to him because he is the Father’s agent.

Of course, terms like ‘Name’ and ‘Word’ were somewhat interchangeable in first century Jewish writings, and thus viewed through the lens of the prologue, it would not be far off the mark to speak of John as regarding Jesus as not just one who bears God’s name, but as God’s name ‘made flesh’; that is to say, Jesus and the name are identified to a far greater extent than in the case of, for instance, the angel Yahoel. Nevertheless, the fact that ideas of this sort were so widespread in first century Judaism strongly suggests that John was as much a Jewish monotheist as the rest of his Jewish contemporaries, who made use of similar imagery and motifs.

There’s an illustration of agency, and of the difference between the way John and his opponents view Jesus, that I sometimes use when teaching on this subject. Have most of you seen the film *The Mask of Zorro*? In one scene, the prison guard comes into the prison and asks whether any of the prisoners there is or has ever been the masked man, Zorro. One after another, prisoners start shouting “I’m Zorro”, “I am Zorro”. This is the sort of claim that John’s Jewish opponents think Jesus is making. They accuse him of being mad, of having a demon. They are convinced that there is no way that he could really be the Messiah, God’s chosen agent, and so they view him as being like one of these prisoners, who is making claims about himself that are untrue and unjustified, and perhaps even a bit crazy. On the other hand, later in the film Antonio Banderas’ character is taught by Zorro, learns his techniques, and his aims become one with the original Zorro’s aims. So when he appears on the scene, wearing the mask of Zorro, doing the work of Zorro, there is a real sense in which one can legitimately say that he now *is* Zorro. This is not completely unlike the way the author of the Fourth Gospel views Jesus. The point John makes again and again is that, as God’s Word become flesh, as the Messiah, as one who stands in a Father-Son relationship with God and fully represents God’s will as God’s appointed agent, Jesus does not ‘make himself’ or ‘make himself out to be’ anything. Rather, he is the one whom God the Father has sent, and this is how Jesus is described throughout John’s Gospel. As God’s true, even supreme agent, he not only bears and expresses God’s full authority, but he can even be called by the name of him who sent him, and thus Jesus in John is called

'Lord', 'God' and 'I am'. But he bears these names precisely as God's agent, and thus Jesus is presented in John 8:28-29 as saying "...then you will know that *I am*, and that I do nothing of my own accord. What I say is what the Father has taught me. He who sent me is with me, and has not left me by myself, for I always do what pleases him". Jesus in John is not a rival to God. He is God's obedient Son and agent. He is the Messiah, the Son of Man, the Word, presented in Jewish categories to answer Jewish objections raised to the beliefs that this Gospel's author and his community held dear. It was this context of conflict, it seems, that was a key, determining factor, which led the author of the Fourth Gospel to present Jesus in the manner that he did. John's development of themes that were present in earlier Christian literature, which viewed Jesus as embodying God's Wisdom and Spirit, and as God's obedient Son, led to this portrait of Jesus as God's unique agent, one who has unique authority precisely because he is uniquely obedient, and who conversely is uniquely obedient precisely because he is the unique agent, the Word become flesh. None of these ideas is wholly absent from all earlier Christian literature, and they have their roots in Jewish thought. What is unique in John is the way they are *configured and developed*. I am convinced that the Fourth Evangelist made these distinctive developments precisely in order to counter the sort of Jewish objections we have just looked at. Non-Christian Jews had objected that Jesus is *making himself out to be* the Son of God and even God. John answers these objections by emphasizing that Jesus does not do or say anything of himself. He thus does not fit their paradigm for understanding him: Jesus does not look like a glory seeker in the least, because he consistently turns the focus away from himself to the Father who sent him. Yet as God's unique agent, as the Word become flesh, he has an authority that is like that of no other, do speak and act on his Father's behalf.

III. Conclusion

Thus, if John was asked in his day and age, "Are Christians monotheists?" I am convinced that he would have answered with an unreserved "Yes." There are only two clear references to 'monotheism' in the Fourth Gospel and both affirm the oneness of God in rather axiomatic language, without defence or explanation (John 5:44; 17:3). If the Johannine Christians had been charged with rejecting monotheism, we would expect the writer to make a more vigorous and explicit defence. But it does not happen. Thus, against Dunn, there is nothing that indicates that John would have been regarded by his Jewish contemporaries as having taken "a step too far" (*Contra James Dunn, The Partings of the Ways*, London: SCM, 1991, p.229).

However, in the centuries after John wrote, other issues arose, and when it was felt necessary to draw a firmer and clearer line between God and creation, it also became necessary to place God's Word clearly on one side or the other. It appears that it was the development of the doctrine of 'creation out of nothing', which was to a large extent responsible for necessitating the clearer definition of what is today considered orthodox Christian belief. Of course, we would love to know what John would have said if he had lived in that time, when it became necessary to choose between equality and subordination, between continuity with God and distinction from God. But it is somewhat unfair to ask John questions that only arose quite some time after he had lived and died. John does not give any sort of direct or explicit answer to these questions that are so important to us, and were so important to the early Church, because in his worldview, it was still possible to hold that the Word was "neither uncreated nor created" or - in John's terms - both 'God' and 'with God.' As we have said, it was only after significant changes in worldview had taken place, probably connected with the development of a clear doctrine of creation out of nothing, that suddenly it became urgent to sort out exactly where the dividing line between God and creation should be drawn. And so it was that Arius and other non-Nicenes said: between God and the Logos, while Athanasius and the Nicenes said: between the Logos and creation. I personally am convinced that if John had been confronted with this question he would have chosen the latter option: Jesus is not the revelation of a lesser god who does not even himself really know the one true God, but rather he is the revelation of God himself. Yet as we have already said, to expect John to answer a question that was only raised later is somewhat unfair. Yet it was this very question which led to the (re)definition of monotheism by Christians in the Trinitarian terms we are familiar with today, and by others in monistic terms. Prior to this there was apparently no problem.

Justin Martyr, a Christian from the second century, describes a conversation which he had with a Jewish man named Trypho. Here too we find no debate about monotheism; in fact, one of Trypho's companions who was himself Jewish agrees with Justin, just as Philo and many other Jews would have, that there is a second figure, who is called by God's name and who appeared in the Jewish Scriptures. Even for some time after John, monotheism was not an issue of controversy between Jews and Christians.

Thus, to conclude, John in his own day and age did not feel that there was any conflict between Christian belief in Jesus and Jewish monotheism. I suppose the problem which faces us is that John gives us a clear answer to the question, "*Were* Christians monotheists?" but not to the question "Are Christians *today* monotheists?" - that is a question which we have to answer for ourselves (one thinks in this context of the arguments of Jürgen Moltmann, namely that

Christians should not class themselves among monotheists but in a separate class as Trinitarians. See his book *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*). So, in concluding this section of our brief study of the theology and Christology of John's Gospel, the question which we must continue to wrestle with is: To what extent do Christians today believe the same things that John and other New Testament authors believed? And inasmuch as our worldview has changed and we have had to answer new questions, have we done justice to the monotheism that was maintained by John and by other New Testament authors, and even by Jesus himself?

The Son of Man Who Came Down From Heaven

Another distinctive feature or emphasis of the Fourth Gospel is what it says about the *pre-existence* of the Son of Man. It seems fairly clear that Christians even prior to John's time used some form of pre-existence language in reference to Jesus. However, the exact meaning of such language, and the question of when it was first applied to Jesus, are the subject of a fair bit of debate. Nevertheless, whatever may have been meant by it, it seems clear that whoever composed the hymn found in Colossians 1:15-20 (to take one example) was using the *language* of pre-existence in relation to Jesus (cf. e.g. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, p.277, esp. n.45). Likewise, around John's time if not earlier, the author of the *Similitudes of Enoch* depicted the Son of Man as pre-existent. However, nowhere prior to John's time do we find anyone drawing the conclusion, on the basis of this language, that Jesus (or in the case of Jewish literature the Messiah) was able to talk about heavenly things while he was on earth. John, however, makes precisely this claim. What led John to draw out this potential implication of earlier traditional beliefs, when no one before him had felt the need to do so? Most likely, it was the debate with Jewish opponents over the relative worth of the revelations brought by Moses and Jesus. If Moses had been to the mountaintop, and perhaps (as many in those times believed) had even travelled up to heaven, to receive revelation, then what could Jesus offer beyond what the Jews already had? This objection to belief in Jesus is actually stated clearly by the Jewish opponents in John 9:28-29: "We are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we don't even know where he comes from". In response, John emphasizes that Jesus, being the Son of Man, must have 'come down from heaven', and thus he can reveal things that no one else can. The clearest indication that it was this context and these debates that led John to draw the kinds of conclusions he did, is the fact that in both passages where such language is used (chapters 3 and 6 of John's Gospel), the overall theme of the passages in question is explicitly and/or implicitly the relationship between Jesus and Moses. It was thus conflict over ideas, and the need to defend them, that led John to develop traditional

christological ideas in the way that he did. This process is what sociologists call *legitimation*. When a group's views or ideology are called into question, they need to defend their beliefs. And so it was that, in the process of answering objections, ones that were raised in relation to earlier beliefs about Jesus, John found new proof texts, drew conclusions based on earlier beliefs that no one else had before him, and related different beliefs and concepts to one another. The result is a more fully-developed christological portrait of Jesus in John's Gospel, one that has its roots in earlier Christian beliefs, but also goes beyond them in significant ways. Thus I am convinced that the conflicts which provide the background to John's Gospel can also help us to understand what motivated John to write as he did. On this topic see further my recent book, *John's Apologetic Christology*, published by Cambridge University Press.

Where Can Wisdom Be Found?

This question raised in Job 28:12 is one to which Judaism had many different answers in John's time. Some said that Wisdom was to be found everywhere, as God's "general revelation." See, for example, Wisdom of Solomon 7:27-8:1:

...in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, and prophets; for God loves nothing so much as the man who lives with wisdom....She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well.

Other said Wisdom dwells in Israel, in particular in the Law. See for example Ecclesiasticus 24:8-12:

Then the Creator of all things gave me a commandment, and the one who created me assigned a place for my tent. And he said, 'Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance.' (See also Baruch 4:1-4)

And 1 Enoch 42:1ff suggests that Wisdom found no dwelling place on earth, and so returned to heaven, accessible only to a select, elite few:

Wisdom found no place where she might dwell;

Then a dwelling place was assigned her in the heavens.

Wisdom went forth to make her dwelling among the children of men,
And found no dwelling place:

Wisdom returned to her place,

& and took her seat among the angels...

John gives the same answer that Paul gave ("in Christ" – see 1 Corinthians 1:24; Colossians 1:15-20), but his answer is not that far from some of the non-Christian Jewish answers given in his time. Which do you think John would have agreed with most/least, and why?

And We Beheld His Glory

The emphasis on 'glory' (*doxa*) in John is unmistakable, and is there from the very outset. But much as in Mark's Gospel, the revelation is paradoxical. In Mark, it is only in light of the cross that human beings can recognize Jesus as the Son of God, and understand who he really is. So too, in John the glorification or lifting up of Jesus is accomplished and recognized precisely in connection with his crucifixion. And so, paradoxically, the 'lifting up' of the Son of Man points to the cross, and through it to the exaltation as well. The distinctive emphasis in John is perhaps the much more emphatic emphasis that *we* have beheld his glory – that is, the Christian community alone has recognized the glory. At times, reading through the lens of the prologue, it has been assumed that the glory is something that shines through the thin veil of Jesus' humanity, a supernatural light that completely overwhelms and overshadows any humanness Jesus might have. But that is far from the case. For John, the glory of the Word-made-flesh is the glory of the crucified Son of God. In John, there is no transfiguration account, nor anything similar that could lead one to understand glory in terms of bright light and a dazzling display of power. In John, the glory is revealed in the weakness and servanthood of Christ, his exalted portrait of Christ as one whose true origins are in heaven and who has supernatural knowledge notwithstanding. The real humanity of Jesus and his obedience unto death were too much part of John's assumptions and his Christian heritage for him to deny them. Yet some, reading John, have felt that John leaves his reader with a portrait of Jesus that is not really, fully human.

For example, Ernst Käsemann writes, "Does the statement 'The Word became flesh' really mean more than that he descended into the world of man and there came into contact with earthly existence, so that an encounter with him became possible? Is not this statement totally overshadowed by the confession 'We beheld his glory', so that it receives its meaning from it? I am not interested in completely denying features of the lowliness of the earthly Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. But do they characterize John's Christology in such a manner that through them the 'true man' of later incarnational theology becomes believable? or do not those features of his lowliness rather represent the absolute minimum of the costume designed for the one who dwelt for a little while among men, appearing

to be one of them, yet without himself being subjected to earthly conditions?" (*The Testament of Jesus* London: SCM, 1968, pp.9-10). Thus Käsemann sums up John's picture of Jesus as "God walking on the face of the earth" (pp.75).

John A. T. Robinson replied to Käsemann's arguments by asserting that while John is liable to be (mis)understood in a Docetic way, this was clearly not the intention of John. "John is content...to let the flesh be 'diaphonous' of the spirit (to use Teilhard de Chardin's word), so that the glory is visible in and through it...But flesh that is diaphonous does not look like flesh: the shining through of the divine gives a docetic appearance...By all the standards of verisimilitude, the Gospel *looks* docetic, static and unhistorical. Indeed, taken literally, as a biography, it *is* docetic, and it is not in the least surprising that this is the charge which it has invited from the beginning. Yet we should do the author the justice of accepting that such a judgment is in his eyes a fearful misunderstanding" (Robinson, "The Use of the Fourth Gospel for Christology Today", in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley, pp.61-78). Similarly, James Dunn (*Unity and Diversity in the NT*, SCM Press, London 1977, p.296) argues that it is not possible to weaken the force of the statement in John 1:14a to simply that of a divine 'appearance' among men: "The ancient world was quite familiar with that idea, and could express it in various ways. John chooses none of them. Instead he affirms simply and pointedly, 'The Word...became flesh' - not appeared as or 'came down into', but 'became' - a confession which (as Schnackenburg puts it) 'can only be understood as a protest against all other religions of redemption in Hellenism and Gnosticism'. Yet there are examples of *ginomai* being used in this sense of 'appeared as', and so C. K. Barrett (*The Gospel According to Saint John*, SPCK, London 1978², p.165) is probably right to suggest that *egeneto* in v14 most likely means exactly what it did in v6, to 'come on the scene'. He thus renders it: "The Word came on the (human) scene - as flesh, man".

Yet all this being said, it is still important that we take these questions seriously. As Käsemann counters objections rhetorically, asking, "In what sense is he flesh, who walks on the water, and through closed doors, who cannot be captured by his enemies, who at the well of Samaria is tired and requires a drink, yet has no need of drink and has food different from that which his disciples seek? He cannot be deceived by men, because he knows their innermost thoughts and even before they speak. He debates with them from the vantage point of the infinite difference between heaven and earth. He has need neither of the witness of Moses nor of the Baptist. He dissociates himself from the Jews, as if they were not his own people, and he meets his mother as the one who is her Lord. He permits Lazarus to lie in the grave for four days in order that the miracle of his resurrection may be more impressive. And in the end the Johannine Christ goes

victoriously to his death of his own accord. Almost superfluously the Evangelist notes that this Jesus at all times lies on the bosom of the Father and that to him who is one with the Father the angels descend and that from him they again ascend...How does all this agree with the understanding of a realistic incarnation?" (*op.cit.* p.9)

Barrett responds by appealing to the concept of paradox (in his essay "Paradox and Dualism", in *Essays on John*), in which he asserts that paradox, unlike dualism, is not a plain contradiction, but implies a relationship between two contrasting propositions. Thus when John says that 'the Word became flesh' and 'we beheld his glory', "...it is a paradoxical glory that we see, since it consists not in God's self assertive might, but in his faithfulness and self-giving, and in order that it might become visible the Logos adopted a paradoxical, unexpected role - a role that might at first seem inconsistent with his deity" (p.105). Perhaps the paradox of exaltation and glory in John's Gospel is not unlike the paradox in the Book of Revelation (5:5-6): the triumph of the Lion of Judah is announced, and John looks and sees...a Lamb that appeared to have been slain! The fact that the author of the Fourth Gospel likewise introduces Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and presents him as being crucified at precisely the time the Passover lambs were slaughtered, gives us an insight into this aspect of his understanding of Jesus' death.

Realized Eschatology and the Spirit

Our look at John's Gospel would be incomplete were we not to mention eschatology. In John's Gospel, there appears to be relatively little that remains for the future. The judgment has already taken place: the line has been drawn, and sides are taken in the here and now (see John 3:18). The apocalyptic emphases found in the Synoptic Gospels have for the most part vanished. The second coming of Jesus is practically replaced by the coming of the Spirit (John 14:16-18). In John 14:23 a similar idea is expressed, as Jesus and the Father will return...to make their home in the believer. This is not to say that John has completely dissolved the tension between 'already' and 'not yet'. But certainly the emphasis is far greater on one pole than on the other. This is perhaps clearest in John 11:24-26. In response to a statement of futurist eschatology, the Johannine Jesus shifts the emphasis wholly into the present: Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and so those who believe live even though dead, while those who do not are dead even if they live. Here we see another important point too: that John's whole worldview is united, so that his eschatology and his Christology are interlinked. Ecclesiology and pneumatology tie in here too: those who believe are a united community that experiences life and lives united in love through the presence of the Spirit, who teaches them all things and leads them into deeper truths that Jesus

did not speak of while he was with them. The developments that John made are thus legitimated through this appeal to the Spirit: John and his community may have had to rethink various issues regarding things like Christology and eschatology, but they were confident that the Spirit was their guide in this whole process.

Conclusion: Points to remember about John

In conclusion, what are some of the key points you need to remember about John's Gospel?

- (1) As we mentioned briefly, the question of who wrote the Gospel and where is hotly debated, and you can easily find the arguments for and against the traditional view of authorship in pretty much any commentary or introduction to the New Testament. But as the external evidence is largely inconclusive, we felt it better to focus on the internal evidence, which may not provide us with a name, but nevertheless gives us some idea of what was going on in the author's time.
- (2) John's Gospel has a number of distinctive characteristics. Its language, its chronology, its Christological concepts, its stories, the teaching it attributes to Jesus - all these things set it apart from the other three Gospels included in the Christian canon.
- (3) John's context is largely responsible for these differences, although we should not neglect the personal aspect, the fact that it was one particular author who decided to relate traditional materials about Jesus to his context in this way.
- (4) The context of the Fourth Gospel is almost without doubt one in which one or more Christian communities were involved in conflict and debate with the leaders of the local Jewish community. The leaders in question had expelled one or more Christians from the synagogue or had threatened to do so. John's Gospel is an attempt to answer some of the objections and accusations that had led to this situation.
- (5) The debates were Christological in focus - that is, they had to do with what these Christians believed about Jesus. The debates in John do not for the most part appear to focus on distinctively Johannine beliefs. Rather, John is providing answers in relation to controversies that had been brewing or actually occurring for some time, but which had intensified in such a way as to make it necessary to give new or more fully developed answers.

- (6) John's Gospel is thus perhaps best described as a work of apologetic and/or legitimation, written by and for Christians who were in conflict with one or more local Jewish communities. John's Gospel thus gives us a unique insight into the process that led from Christianity being one of many Jewish movements vying for the adherence of the Jewish populace, to a religious group that had to find an understanding of its identity independent of a Jewish majority who did not view Jesus the way they did.

Prophecy in the Gospel of John

Some of the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ's death fulfilled in John's Gospel. This chapter is helpful preparing ourselves to the study of the Book of Revelation.

We had all gone astray like sheep, each taking his own way, and Yahweh brought the acts of rebellion of all of us to bear on him. Ill-treated and afflicted, he never opened his mouth, like a lamb led to the slaughter-house, like a sheep dumb before its shearers he never opened his mouth. Isaiah 53:6-7

Aspects of Jesus' Death in John's Gospel	Old Testament Reference
A result of obedience to the Father – 18:11	Psalms 40:8
Announced by Christ – 18:32 [3:14]	Numbers 21:8-9
Betrayed by a friend – John 13:18	Psalms 41:9
Died in place of His people – 18:14	Isaiah 53:4-6
Died with evildoers - 19:18	Isaiah 53:12
Was an innocent victim – 18:39; 19:5,7	Isaiah 53:9
Was crucified – 19:18	Psalms 22:16
Garment divided – 19:24	Psalms 22:18
Side pierced – 19:37	Zechariah 12:10
No bones broken – 19:33-37	Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20 (21)
Was buried in a rich man's tomb – 19:38-42	Isaiah 53:9
Healed by the Christ	Wisdom 16:5-7
lifted up on the cross – 3:14-17	(referencing Numbers 21:4-9)



Old Testament compared with the New Testament or Covenant

Chalice and Trumpet Judgments of the Book of Revelation versus the plagues of Egypt

The Chalice Judgments are repeats, with variation, of the Trumpet Judgments. Since the Trumpet Judgments were essentially warnings they took only a third of the Land; with the Chalices, however, the destruction is total. The similarities between the Chalice and Trumpet Judgments and the Plagues of Egypt cannot be casual coincidence. The similarities should make us ask *"Why is the vision (or the plague) repeated-what is the connection?"*

CHALICE Judgements in Revelation	TRUMPET Judgements in Revelation	PLAGUES ON EGYPT In the book of Exodus
1. On the Land, becoming Sores (16:2)	1. On the Land; 1/3 earth, trees, grass burned (8:7)	Boils (6th plague Exodus 9:8-12)
2. On the sea, becoming blood (16:3)	2. On the sea; 1/3 sea becomes blood, 1/3 sea creatures die, 1/3 ships destroyed (8:8-9)	Waters become blood (1st plague Exodus 7:17- 21)
3. On rivers and springs, becoming blood (16:8-9)	3. On rivers and springs; 1/3 waters become wormwood (8:10-11)	Waters become blood (1st plague Exodus 7:17- 21)
4. On the sun, causing it to scorch (16:8-9)	4. 1/3 of sun, moon, and stars darkened (8:12)	Darkness (9th plague Exodus 10:21-23)

5. On the throne of the Beast, causing darkness (16:10-11)	5. Demonic locusts tormenting men (9:13-21)	Locusts (8th plague Exodus 10: 4-20)
6. On the Euphrates, drying it up to make way for kings of the east; invasion of frog-demons; Armageddon (16:12-16)	6. Army from Euphrates kills 1/3 of mankind (9:13-21)	Invasion of frogs from the river (2nd plague Exodus 8:2-4)
7. On the air, causing storm, earthquake, hail and the Great City splits into 3 parts (16:17-21)	7. Voices, storm, earthquake, hail (11:15-19)	Hail (7th plague Exodus 9:18-26)

The fulfilment of the promises of the Davidic Covenant in the promises God made to David's descendent, the Virgin Mary of Nazareth

Promises made to King David	Promises made to the Virgin Mary
I am going to make your fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth." (Literally: I will make your name great...) 2 Samuel 7:9	...and you will name him Jesus. He will be great... Luke 1:32
Yahweh furthermore tells you he will make you a dynasty (literally = will make you a house). And when your days are over and you fall asleep with your ancestors, I shall appoint your heir... 2 Samuel 7:11-12	The Lord will give him the throne of his ancestor David. Luke 1:32
...your own son to succeed you and I shall make his sovereignty secure (literally = the throne of your kingdom I shall establish forever.) 2 Samuel 7:13	Your dynasty (house) and your sovereignty (kingdom) will ever stand firm before me and your throne be forever secure. 2 Samuel 7:16 ... he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end. Luke 1:33
I shall be a father to him and he a son to me.. 2 Samuel 7:14	And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Luke 1:32

The Second and First Adam Contrasted

Genesis 3:15 contains the promise of the redemption of mankind after the Fall of Adam and Eve. The Incarnation of the Christ was the manifestation of the promise and it was fulfilled with Jesus Christ's sacrificial death and glorious resurrection. The New Testament portrays Jesus as the "Second Adam" whose obedience and sacrificial death on the cross undo Adam's disobedience [see Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:45-49]. Jesus, the Second Adam, triumphed over the same temptations to which the first Adam fell into sin.

TEMPTATION: The first and second Adams contrasted:

1 John 2:16	Genesis 3:6	Luke 4:1-13
<i>"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father finds no place in him..."</i>	The First Adam: <i>"Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees...?"</i>	Second Adam = Jesus of Nazareth: <i>"Then the devil said to Him..."</i>
the lust of the flesh: <i>"disordered bodily desires"</i>	<i>"The woman saw the tree was good to eat.."</i>	<i>"tell this stone to turn into a loaf"</i>
the lust of the eyes: <i>"disordered desires of the eyes"</i>	<i>"..and pleasing to the eye, and..."</i>	<i>"the devil...showed Him all the kingdoms of the world"</i>
the pride of life: <i>"pride in possession"</i>	<i>"that it was enticing for the wisdom that it could give."</i>	<i>"If you are the Son ...throw Yourself down from here"</i>

In Romans 5:15-19 St. Paul contrasts Adam and Christ as "alike" but "unlike"

ADAM AND CHRIST ALIKE	ADAM AND CHRIST UNALIKE
Both Adam and Christ had an affect upon the whole human race	Sin and death came from Adam while righteousness and life came from Christ
Both endured the temptation of Satan	Adam failed and Christ was victorious
Through both Adam and Christ humanity receives an "inheritance"	Through Adam's failure humanity inherits death, original sin and personal sin becomes a plague on

	mankind. Through Christ's victory humanity inherits adoption into God family and the promise of eternal life.
Both were human men	Jesus was both human and divine
Both the acts of Adam and Jesus invoke a divine verdict	Satan stood behind the act of Adam while the grace of God stood behind Christ; the verdict behind Adam's act is judgment while the verdict behind Jesus' is acquittal
Both Adam and Jesus exercised their free will	Adam willingly fell from grace and Jesus willingly laid down His life in sacrifice for all mankind
Both were born into the world as sinless and immortal beings	Adam lost his immortality when he fell from grace while Jesus remained pure and sinless and through His sacrifice and Resurrection has made God's gift of immortality once again available to man

Just as there is a Second Adam there is also a Second Eve. Mary, the Virgin Mother of Christ is the Second Eve. Just as the First Eve cooperated in the Fall of man so the Second Eve cooperated in the redemption and salvation of the entire human race.

SALVATION: The two Eve's contrasted:

THE VIRGIN EVE	THE VIRGIN MARY
Daughter of the first Covenant	Daughter of the Sinai Covenant
Pledged obedience under the covenant	Pledged obedience under the covenant
Eve's disobedience resulted in the fall into sin of the entire human race. The result was death, physically and spiritually.	Mary's obedience to God resulted in the offer of the gift of salvation to the entire human race. The result was eternal life

Biblical events which prefigure baptism by immersion through the Holy Spirit

"Christ himself died once and for all for sins, the upright for the sake of the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. They

refused to believe long ago, while God patiently waited to receive them, in Noah's time when the ark was being built. In it only a few, that is eight souls, were saved through water. It is the baptism corresponding to this water which saves you now..." 1 Peter 3:18-21

The first catechism ever of the Church, known as the Didache, or "The Teaching", written not later than AD 120 records: Regarding baptism. Baptize as follows: after first explaining all these points, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in running water. But if you have no running water, baptize in other water; and if you cannot in cold, then in warm. But if you have neither, pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Before the baptism, let the baptizer and the candidate for baptism fast, as well as any others that are able. Require the candidate to fast one or two days previously." [Didache, 7. 1-4 - Patrology, the study of the Church Fathers].

Biblical events that prefigured Christian baptism in Christ:

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE	EVENT
Genesis 1:1-2	1. Creation: when the Holy Spirit brought life and order to the waters of chaos
Genesis 6:9-18 1 Peter 3:20-21	2. Noah and his family were saved from the waters of the flood that cleansed the earth of sin, which St. Peter tells us prefigures our baptism in 1 Peter 3: 20-21.
Exodus 14:1 1 Corinthians 10:1-2	3. The children of Israel, fleeing from the Egyptians, passed through the waters of the Red Sea-passing from the old life of slavery into their new life as God's Covenant people; which St. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 is a form of baptism.
Exodus 30:17-21 Numbers 19:11-13	4. The water purification rites of the Old Covenant: -When the priests cleansed themselves with the water from the laver so that they were ritually cleansed and able to enter the Holy Place of the desert Tabernacle and later the Temple in Jerusalem. -The ritual purification for coming in contact with the dead.
2 Kings 5:1-19	5. When the prophet Elisha told the Syrian general Naaman to dip himself 7 times in the waters of the Jordan River to be healed.

- Ezekiel 36:24-27 6. Ezekiel's prophecy that Yahweh will pour clean water over His people and they will be cleansed and filled with a new heart and a new spirit when God places His very spirit within them.
- Joshua 3:14-17 7. The crossing of the Jordan River when God parted the waters and the priests stood midway across the River with the Ark of the Covenant as the children of Israel passed through the waters of the Jordan, leaving their old lives behind to become citizens of the Promised Land.
- Matthew 3:4-5; Mark 1:4-5; Luke 3:3-4; John 1:31 8. The baptism of John the Baptist which called the faithful of Israel into the baptismal waters of repentance in preparation for the coming of the Messiah's ministry proclaiming the Kingdom of God.

Comparisons between the Themes of the First Eleven Chapters of Genesis and the Last Ten Chapters of the Book of Revelation

GENESIS	SCRIPTURE	REVELATION	SCRIPTURE
1. The creation of heaven and earth	Genesis 1:1-2:4a	1. The creation of the new heaven and earth	Revelation 21:1-5
2. The Eden Sanctuary, the river that flowed out of Eden, and the Tree of Life	Genesis 2:4b-17	2. The Sanctuary of the New Jerusalem, the river that flowed from the New Jerusalem, and the Tree of Life	Revelation 21:9-22:2
3. The bridegroom (Adam), the bride (Eve) and the wedding of Adam and Eve	Genesis 2:18-25	3. The Bride = the Church, and her Bridegroom = Christ; the wedding of the Lamb	Revelation 19:5-9; 21:1-9
4. Satan and the woman, Eve	Genesis 3:1-13	4. Satan and "the Woman," the	Revelation 12:1-17

		"new Eve"	
5. The curse	Genesis 3:14-19	5. The curse is abolished	Revelation 22:3
6. Death enters creation	Genesis 3:19	6. Death is destroyed	Revelation 20:14-15
7. Babylon built; judgment on the nations	Genesis 10:10; 11:1-4	7. Babylon destroyed; judgment on the nations	Revelation 14:6-20
8. The Redeemer is promised	Genesis 3:15	8. The victorious Redeemer reigns	Revelation 20:1-6; 21:22-27; 22:3-5

Comparison between the Priestly Orders of Old and New Testament

What comparisons and contrasts can be made between the priestly order of the Levitical priesthood in the Sinai Covenant, the order of Jesus' eternal priesthood in the New Covenant, and the order of Melchizedek, if he is indeed Shem the firstborn righteous son of Noah, in the Noah Covenant?

Priestly order of Sinai Covenant	Priestly order of Melchizedek as Shem	Priestly order of Jesus Christ
Succession of priestly order based on genealogy [Exodus 29:29; Numbers 18:1-7; 21-22; Sirach 45:15]	No priestly succession order listed in Scripture - the first priest in Scripture appointed by God [Genesis 14:18]	Jesus is the eternal High Priest - the last and the only eternal priest appointed by God [Hebrews 7:26-8:2]
Priests were chosen from among men to be a compassionate advocate of Israel, God's covenant people [Exodus 28:1; 41-43; Hebrews 5:2-3].	Chosen from among men: [Genesis 9:26-27] to rule over his brothers and their descendants through the Noachide world Covenant [Genesis 9:8-10, 17]	Chosen from among men to be a compassionate High Priest and advocate of the worldwide New Covenant people [Hebrews 4:15] of God [Matthew 28:19-20].
Tithes were paid to the Levitical priesthood from	Tithes were paid to the priest Melchizedek by	Tithes are paid to Christ our High Priest through

within the covenant family [Numbers 18:20-24; Deuteronomy 14:28-29]	Abram; if he is Shem the tithes are paid within the covenant family [Genesis 14:20]	His Church by the covenant family
Sacrifice and offerings were made by the covenant people through the priesthood [Leviticus 4:20, 31; 5:13; Numbers 15:25].	Abram paid a tithe of a tenth of his spoil from battle to Melchizedek [Genesis 14:20]	The covenant people bring Christ, our High Priest, offerings of bread and wine and He gives us, under the appearance of bread and wine, His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity [Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-27]
In priestly role offered the peoples blessings, gifts, and sacrifices to God [Numbers 6:22-27]	As God's priest he blessed Abram and brought bread and wine as a priestly gift [Genesis 14:18-19]	Offers eternal blessings to the people and an eternal sacrifice to God on behalf of the covenant people [Hebrews 9:25-28; 10:10]
The priesthood of the Sinai Covenant was limited to priestly functions	Melchizedek was both a High Priest and the King of Salem/Jerusalem [Genesis 14:18]	Jesus is both the New Covenant High Priest and King of the heavenly Jerusalem
The priesthood of the Sinai Covenant served only the children of Israel through the Covenant God made which was exclusively limited to them [Exodus 19:5-6] .	God's Covenant with Noah extended to all the earth. If the covenant continued through Shem, his priesthood was over all peoples of the earth bound in one covenant family. Melchizedek is titled in Genesis 14 as "the priest" of the Most High God. There is no other priest.	God's New Covenant is extended to include all nations [Matthew 28:19-20]. Jesus is the eternal high priest bringing the peoples of the earth back into one covenant family. Jesus is the eternal priest of the New Covenant. There is no other High Priest of the New Covenant

Contrasts between the Old and New Covenants

Old Covenant	Dominion of sin →	Law = Judgment →	Death and the grave
New Covenant	Dominion of grace →	Holiness = Sanctification →	Salvation /Eternal life

See Romans 6:16-23 and Paul's contrast of the parallels between two dominations or-one form of domination is under the Old Covenant Law and the other under the New Covenant in Christ.

The Old Covenant Law of Moses could not bring salvation; it only identified sin but was incapable of removing sin (the blood of an animal could never be perfect enough to remove sin but was only a temporary remedy to sin). Disobedience to the Law led to transgression of the Law and God's wrathful judgment but through the New Covenant promises, established in the blood of the sacrifice of the perfect "Lamb of God", Jesus Christ, man received God's promise of salvation in the gift of unmerited grace and faith.

The Law →transgression → wrath **God's promises →unmerited grace → faith**

Holy Mountains of God

Mountain	Scripture Reference
1. The Garden of Eden	Genesis 2:10; Ezekiel 28:12-14
2. Noah's Ark rests on Mt. Ararat after the Great Flood	Genesis 8:4
3. The substitutionary atonement of the ram in place of the sacrifice of Abraham's son Isaac on Mt. Moriah	Genesis 22:2
4. Sinai Covenant on Mt. Sinai/Horeb	Exodus 19:12
5. The site of Solomon's Temple on Mt. Moriah	2 Chronicles 3:1
6. Elijah's defeat of the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel [carmel is a Hebrew word for "garden"]	1 Kings 18
7. Jesus and the giving of the New Covenant law on the Mt. of Beatitudes	Matthew 5
8. Jesus' official appointment of Peter as	Matthew 16:13-19; Mark 8:27-30;

- Vicar of the Church on the mountain at Caesarea Philippi Luke 9:18-21;
9. Jesus prevailed over temptation on a mountain Matthew 4:8-11;
Luke 4:1-13
10. The Mt. of Transfiguration when Jesus appeared in His glory Matthew 17 [Peter refers to this place as "the holy mountain" in 2 Peter 1:16-18]
11. Jesus is arrested in a garden on the Mt. of Olives; Jesus ascends to the Father from the Mt. of Olives Matthew 26:47ff; Mark 14:43ff;
Luke 22:47ff;
John 18:3ff;
Acts 1:1-19
12. Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified was a lower elevation of Mt. Moriah Matthew 27:32-36; Mark 15:21-27;
Luke 23:26-34; John 19:17-24

Isaiah's Prophecies fulfilled in the Messiah – Jesus of Nazareth

THE PROPHECY	THE FULFILLMENT
The Messiah:	Jesus of Nazareth:
Will be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)	Was born of a virgin named Mary (Luke 1:26-31)
Will have a Galilean ministry (Isaiah 9:1,2)	Ministry began in Galilee of the Gentiles (Matthew 4:13-16)
Will be an heir to the throne of David (Isaiah 9:7; 11:1, 10)	Was given the throne of His father David (Luke 1:32, 33)
Will have His way prepared (Isaiah 40:3-5)	Was announced by John the Baptist (John 1:19-28)
Will be spat on and struck (Isaiah 50:6)	Was spat on and beaten (Matthew 26:67)
Will be exalted (Isaiah 52:13)	Was highly exalted by God and the People (Philippians 2:9, 10)
Will be disfigured by suffering (Isaiah 52:14; 53:2)	Was scourged by Roman soldiers who gave Him a crown of thorns (Mark 15:15-19)
Will make a blood atonement (Isaiah 53:5)	Shed His blood to atone for our sins (1 Peter 1:2)
Will be widely rejected (Isaiah 53:1,3)	Was not accepted by many (John 12:37, 38)
Will bear our sins and sorrows (Isaiah 53:4, 5)	Died because of our sins (Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 2:24, 25)
Will be our substitute (Isaiah 53:6,8)	Died in our place (Romans 5:6, 8; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

Will voluntarily accept our guilt and punishment for sin (Isaiah 53:7,8)	Jesus took on our sins (John 1:29; Romans 6:10; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
Gentiles will seek Him (Isaiah 11:10)	Gentiles came to speak to Jesus (John 12:20,21)
Will be silent before His accusers (Isaiah 53:7)	Was silent before Herod and his court (Luke 23:9)
Will save us who believe in Him (Isaiah 53:12)	Provided salvation for all who believe (John 3:16; Acts 16:31)
Will die with transgressors (Isaiah 53:12)	Was numbered with the transgressors (Mark 15:27, 28; Luke 22:37)
Will heal the brokenhearted (Isaiah 61:1,2)	Healed the brokenhearted (Luke 4:18, 19)
God's Spirit will rest on Him (Isaiah 11:2)	The Spirit of God descended on Jesus (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; 4:1)
Will be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9)	Was buried in the tomb of Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea (Matthew 27:57-60; John 19:38-42)
He will judge the earth with righteousness (Isaiah 11:4,5)	Jesus was given authority to judge (John 5:27; Luke 19:22; 2 Timothy 4:1,8)

Isaiah's Suffering Servant fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth

Isaiah Chapter 53	Old and New Testaments Fulfilments
Verse 1: <i>Who has given credence to what we have heard?</i>	Quoted in John 12:38; Romans 10:16
Verse 3: <i>Despised, the lowest of men</i>	Psalms 22:6-7 [Jesus will reference this Psalm from the cross: " <i>Father forgive them for they know not what they do</i> " Ps.22:1]
Verse 3: <i>A man of sorrows</i>	Passion in all the Gospels
Verse 4: <i>Yet ours were the sufferings he was bearing</i>	Matthew 8:17
Verse 4: <i>We thought of him as someone</i>	Hebrews 2:10

being punished and struck with affliction by God

Verse 5: *whereas he was being wounded for our rebellions* 2 Corinthians 5:21

Verse 5: *crushed because of our guilt* Romans 4:25

Verse 5: *Punishment reconciling us fell on him* Galatians 3:13

Verse 5: *and we have been healed by his bruises* 1 Peter 2:24

Verse 6: *We had all gone astray like sheep each taking his own way* Ezekiel 34;
1 Peter 2:25

Verse 6: *Yahweh brought the acts of rebellion of all of us to bear on him* 2 Corinthians 5:21

Verse 7: *Ill-treated and afflicted,* Matthew 26:63

Verse 7: *He never opened his mouth* 1 Peter 2:23

Verse 7: *Like a lamb led to the slaughter house* Jeremiah 11:19;
Matthew 27:14

Verse 7: *Like a sheep dumb before its shearers* John 1:29

Verse 7: *He never opened his mouth* Acts 8:32-33

Verse 8: *Forcibly after sentence he was taken...having been struck down for his people's rebellion* Matthew 27:20-26;
Mark 15:8-15;
Luke 23:20-25;
John 19:12-15

Verse 9: *He was given a grave with the wicked* Matthew 27:38;
Luke 22:37

Verse 9: *And his tomb was with the rich* Matthew 27:60;
Mark 15:42-46;
Luke 23:50-5;
John 19:38-42

Verse 9: *Although he had done no* 1 Peter 2:22

violence

Verse 10: *It was Yahweh's good pleasure to crush him with pain; if he gives his life as a sin offering*

Passion in all Gospels and;
Romans 6:7;
Hebrews 9:26;
1 John 1:7

Verse 10: *He will see his offspring and prolong his life, through him Yahweh's good pleasure will be done*

Matthew 28:5-8;
Mark 16:1-8;
Luke 24:1-10;
John 20:1

Verse 11: *After the ordeal he has endured he will see the light and be content. By his knowledge, the upright one, my servant will justify many by taking their guilt on himself.*

Romans 3:26;
1 Peter 3:18

Verse 12: *Hence I shall give him a portion with the many, and he will share the booty with the mighty, for having exposed himself to death and for being counted as one of the rebellious, whereas he was bearing the sin of many and interceding for the rebellious.*

Jesus took upon Himself the task of universal redemption which Isaiah assigned to the Suffering Servant.
See Matthew 26:28;
Mark 14:22-25;
Luke 22:19-20;
John 6:51-56

Just as at Sinai when the blood of the sacrifice sealed the covenant of Yahweh with His people [Exodus 24:4-8]
likewise, on the altar of the Cross the blood of Jesus, the perfect victim, sealed the "New Covenant" promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Jesus Christ our Redeemer

OLD TESTAMENT QUALIFICATION	CHRIST'S FULFILLMENT
Blood relationship Deuteronomy 25:5, 7-10; Leviticus 25:25; Ruth 2:1	Galatians 4:4, 5: "...but when the completion of the time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, to redeem the

subjects of the Law, so that we could receive adoption as sons."

Hebrews 2:16, 17: *"For it was not the angels that he took to himself; he took to himself the line of Abraham. It was essential that he should in this way be made completely like his brothers so that he could become a compassionate and trustworthy high priest for their relationship to God, able to expiate the sins of the people."*

Also see John 1:14;

Romans 1:3;

Philippians 2:5-8

Necessary Resources

Leviticus 25:25-26;

Ruth 2:1

1 Corinthians 6:20: *"Are you not your own property, then; you have been bought at a price. So use your body for the glory of God."*

1 Peter 1:18, 19: *"For you know that the price of your ransom from the futile way of life handed down from your ancestors was paid, not in anything perishable like silver or gold, but in precious blood as of a blameless and spotless lamb, Christ."*

Also see 1 Corinthians 6:20

Willingness to Buy

Deuteronomy 25:7, 9;

Ruth 3:11

John 10:15-18: *"...just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and I must lead these too. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, one shepherd. The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as I have power to lay it down, so I have power to take it up again; and this is the command I have received from my Father."*

1 John 3:16: *"This is the proof of love, that he laid down his life for us, and we too ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."*

Also see Matthew 20:28; Hebrews 10:7; Titus 2:14

Jesus the Prophet greater than Moses

Sign prefigured by Moses	Jesus the Greater than Moses
1. The first "sign"	<p>1. At Cana Jesus, using the holy water from stone vessels, transforms water into wine, the "blood of the grape."</p> <p>This first "sign" is prefigured by Moses' first "sign:" turning the Nile river water into blood, even the water in stone vessels. [John chapter 2 and Exodus 7:8-25; note verse 20 = <i>even in vessels of wood and stone</i>].</p>
2. The Passover	<p>2. Moses was the first prophet to experience the Passover in Exodus 12 by redeeming the firstborn sons of Israel, but Jesus is the true Firstborn Son, and He is the true Passover victim. In order to save the firstborn sons Moses instructed the people to put the blood of the lamb on their door posts and to eat its roasted flesh at the first Passover. But it is Jesus who is the sacrificial firstborn Son, identified by John the Baptist as the true <i>Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world</i> [1:29].</p>
3. Moses who feeds His people	<p>3. In the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes in chapter 6:1-18 Jesus is the new Moses who feeds the crowd of over 5,000 people with five barley loaves [the 5 books of Moses] and two fishes [symbols of the Old and New Covenant Church] with 12 baskets left over prefigured by Moses and the miracle of the manna from heaven feeding the 12 tribes of Israel but in the New Covenant Jesus will provide a superabundance of grace. The 12 baskets left over are often misinterpreted as representing the 12 Apostles. This is missing the point that Israel began as a nation of 12</p>

tribes descended from 12 men and now the new Israel, the Catholic-universal Church, will trace her descent from 12 spiritual fathers, the Apostles who are the first bishops of the New Covenant Church. In the New Covenant there will be an abundance of spiritual gifts not like the limited manna of the Old Covenant.

4. The manna of Moses

4. In the time of Moses the covenant people received manna, bread from heaven, to nourish them on their journey to the Promised Land for 40 years. In John 6:1-15 Jesus also miraculously feeds the multitude like Moses but then in John 6:32-58 Jesus identifies His flesh as the true bread from heaven and the means to salvation; it is His flesh we must eat to be saved, and His blood we must drink to nourish us on our journey to the Promise Land of heaven. His flesh is the bread from heaven that is greater than the manna of Moses.

5. The Tabernacle: God's presence

5. Jesus is the God who is present: In Exodus 25:1-31:11 and 35:1-40:33 Moses received instruction on how to build the Sanctuary in which God's presence would dwell. Centuries Later, King Solomon would build the Temple, God's Dwelling Place, in Jerusalem. At the beginning of His ministry in chapter 2 at the Feast of Passover Jesus cleanses the Temple [John 2:13-22], a Temple which is prefigured by the Tabernacle of Moses where the presence of God resided. When Jesus cleansed the Temple, God was indeed present in His Dwelling Place. Jesus' cleansing of the Temple

was to call Israel to repentance and to prepare the Old Covenant Church to be transformed into a fully redeemed New Covenant people. Moses built the first Tabernacle which housed the presence of God but Jesus' human body is the dwelling place of God and He will build the New Covenant Church, which after the coming of the Holy Spirit at the second great Pentecost, will be every covenant believer who becomes through the miracle of baptism by water and the Spirit, the dwelling place of God.

6. The Bronze Serpent which was "lifted up" to heal the people

6. In John 3:14 Jesus tells the people: *As Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.* Moses, at God's command, lifted up an image of a bronze serpent on a pole to heal the people. Jesus, lifted up on the Cross as God's holy sacrifice, will give life to whomever looks up to Him and believes. Moses saved the children of Israel; Jesus will save the world. In the sacrifice of the Mass, it is Jesus' image on the Crucifix to which we look to remind us that through Him we are spiritually healed.

7. Moses the Prophet, Lawgiver, and covenant mediator

7. Jesus is the promised prophet of Deuteronomy 18:14-22, He is the giver of the New Law, and He is the mediator of the New and more perfect Covenant [John 4:19; 7:40; James 1:25; Romans 8:1-2; Hebrews 3:3; Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24].

8. Moses leads the children of Israel in the desert wandering, the Exodus

8. In John 5: 5-9 Jesus heals a man paralyzed for 38 years. The man's

generation of Israel is paralyzed from unbelief and cannot take possession of the Promised Land. 38 years later the old generation is dead and the new generation will complete Israel's destiny [Deuteronomy 2:14].

paralysis signified Israel's paralysis after her rejection of God's plan at Kadesh Barnes, the plan to bring the people to salvation in the Promise Land by the conquest of Canaan. At God's command the people were barred from entering the Promised Land until every member of that "accursed generation" had died [Numbers 13-14]. For 38 years Israel was paralyzed before she was restored and led by Joshua [Yehosua] and given salvation in the Promised Land. Jesus [also named in Hebrew, Yehosua] has come to heal a paralyzed nation, to restore her and to lead her to the "Promised Land," heaven

9. Moses and the water miracles

9. Jesus demonstrates His divinity for the Apostles in a private sign only for them when He walks on the water in John 6:16-21. Moses performed five water miracles that prefigured Christ:

- Moses turned the water of the Nile River into blood [Exodus 7:14-24]; even the water which was being stored in stone vessels [Exodus 7:19].
- Moses controlled the forces of nature when he parted the Sea of Reeds [Red Sea] so the people could pass safely to the other side [Exodus 14:15-22].
- Moses struck a rock in the wilderness to give the people water to drink on their journey through the wilderness [Exodus 17:5-6].
- In Numbers 20:10 Moses was

instructed by God to "speak" to the rock in order to receive life-giving water.

- Moses turned bitter water sweet with the wood of a tree [Exodus 15:22-25].

Jesus reenacts Moses' water miracles and surpasses them:

- At Cana Jesus turned the water in stone vessels into the blood of the grape [John 2:6-9].
- He walked on water and controlled nature to calm the sea [John 6:16-21].
- He identified Himself as the source of "living Water" [Holy Spirit] to the Samaritan woman [John 4:10-14].
- Jesus announced to the covenant people that He is the source of the "living water" promised by the prophets at the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. His is the Rock from whom living water flows [1 Corinthians 10:1-5]. He was struck down once for our sins and now all we have to do is call out to Him and He comes to us in the Eucharist [John 7:37-39].
- Jesus will give up His life on a tree [the cross]. His sacrifice will bring the sweet gift of salvation to mankind when water and blood flow from the side of the "Rock" of our salvation. The

Resurrection will be His 7th and final public sign [John 19:16; 34].

10. The Feast of Tabernacles commemorated the events of the Exodus experience and the building of the Tabernacle and its dedication to Yahweh.

10. The Feast of Tabernacles was feast celebrated in remembrance of the Exodus experience with Moses when God led the people in the Pillar of Fire, the water miracles on the journey to Sinai, when Moses returned from the Mountain of God with the Law as their "light" to guide them in their lives, and when God took possession of His Tabernacle and later the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem by supernaturally lighting the altar of sacrifice. At the Feast of Tabernacles Jesus announces in John chapter 8 that He is the Light and those who follow Him will have the light of life. The Tabernacle that Moses instructed the people to build led them in the wilderness journey and symbolized God's presence with them. Now Jesus' body is the true Tabernacle for now God is truly present among His people [John 2: 19-22]. Moses led the people in the Exodus from political slavery but the New Moses will give them greater than what the prophet Moses could give: He will free them from the death grip of sin and will give them eternal life.

As Jesus continues to work miracles which show His authority is from God, in the 4th Gospel St. John emphasizes that these miraculous events are not just miracles but "signs" pointing to the fulfilment of prophecy and identifying Jesus not just as a human, earthly Messiah but as the divine Saviour of Daniel's vision in Daniel 7:13-14. The seven public miracles and other aspects of His ministry are all "signs" which were prefigured by Moses who also worked "signs" during his ministry.

For example:

Yahweh to Moses: *Take this staff in your hand; with this you will perform the **signs*** [Exodus 4:17]

*Moses then told Aaron all that Yahweh had said when sending him and all the **signs** he had ordered him to perform. [..]. ..and Aaron repeated everything that Yahweh had said to Moses, and in the sight of the people performed the **signs*** [Exodus 4:28, 30]

Yahweh to Moses: *But I myself shall make Pharaoh stubborn and shall perform many a **sign** and wonder in Egypt* [Exodus 7:3].

*Yahweh then said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh, for I have made him and his officials stubborn, to display these **signs** of mine among them; so that you can tell your sons and your grandsons how I made fools of the Egyptians and what **signs** I performed among them, so that you would know that I am Yahweh* [Exodus 10:1-2; etc].

In chapters 1-8 John has offered evidence that testifies to Jesus as the holy One promised in Deuteronomy 18:15-20 who is a prophet greater than Moses. Compare some of the "signs" of Jesus' ministry to Israel's Exodus experience and Moses' ministry as God's servant and covenant mediator's signs worked among the people "so that they would know" that He is God. Jesus is the new law giver and new covenant mediator who will lead the new Exodus:

...but he deserves a greater glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house is more honoured than the house itself. Every house is built by someone, of course, but God built everything that exists. It is true that Moses was trustworthy in the household of God, as a servant is, acting as witness to the things which were yet to be revealed, but Christ is trustworthy as a son is, over his household. And we are his household, as long as we fearlessly maintain the hope in which we glory. Hebrews 3:3-6

John wants his readers to understand that Jesus the Messiah is the greater than Moses, leading the New Exodus to salvation. In John chapter 5 Jesus confronts the Jews, accusing them of rejecting His teaching and His miraculous signs with the statement:

Do not imagine that I am going to accuse you before the Father: you have placed your hopes on Moses, and Moses will be the one who accuses you. If you really believe him you would believe me too, since it was about me that he was writing; but if you will not believe what he wrote, how can you believe what I say? John 5:45-47.

The reason they don't believe Him, Jesus tells them, is because they don't believe Moses. But it will be their great prophet and "giver of the Law" Moses who, as prosecuting attorney before the throne of God, will testify that the Old Covenant Church did not listen to the Firstborn Son of God when He came to offer them the gift of eternal life as God's Holy Prophet, Priest, and King: Deuteronomy 18:19:

I shall put my words into his mouth and he will tell them everything I command him. Anyone who refuses to listen to my words, spoken by him in my name, will have to render an account to me.

Luke 9:35: *And a voice came from the cloud saying, 'This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.'*

The Virgin Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant (Quotations to be discussed-Sub Conditione)

The Ark of the Covenant	The Virgin Mary The Ark of the New Covenant
God the Holy Spirit overshadowed and then indwelt the Ark. The Ark became the dwelling place of the presence of God [Exodus 40:34-35]	God the Holy Spirit overshadowed and then indwelt Mary. At that time Mary's womb became the dwelling place of the presence of God [Luke 1:35].
The Ark contained the Ten Commandments [the words of God in stone], a pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that came back to life [Deuteronomy 10:3-5; Hebrews 9:4].	The womb of the Virgin contained Jesus: the living Word of God enfleshed, the living bread from heaven, "the Branch" (Messianic title) who would die but come back to life [Luke 1:35].
The Ark traveled to the hill country of Judah to rest in the house of Obed-edom [2 Samuel 6:1-11]	Mary travelled to the hill country of Judah (Judea) to the home of Elizabeth [Luke 1:39]

Dressed in a priestly ephod, King David approached the Ark and danced and leapt for joy [2 Samuel 6:14]

David shouted for joy in the presence of God and the holy Ark [2 Samuel 6:15]

David asked, "How is it that the Ark of the Lord comes to me?" [2 Samuel 6:9]

The Ark remained in the house of Obed-edom for 3 months [2 Samuel 6:11]

The house of Obed-edom was blessed by the presence of the Ark [2 Samuel 6:11]

The Ark returned to its sanctuary and eventually ends up in Jerusalem where the presence and glory of God is revealed in the newly built Temple [2 Samuel 6:12; 1 Kings 8:9-11]

God made Aaron's rod (which would be kept in the Ark) return to life and budded to prove he was the legitimate High Priest [Numbers 17:8].

When the Ark was outside the Holy of Holies [when it was being transported] it was to be covered with a blue veil [Numbers 4:4-6]

In Revelation 11:19 John sees the Ark of the Covenant in heaven [this is the last verse of chapter 11]

John the Baptist, son of a priest who would himself become a priest, leapt for joy in Elizabeth's womb at the approach of Mary [Luke 1:43]

Elizabeth exclaimed with a loud cry of joy in the presence of God within Mary [Luke 1:42]

Elizabeth asks, "Why is this granted unto me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" [Luke 1:43]

Mary remained in the house of her cousin Elizabeth for 3 months [Luke 1:56].

The word "blessed" is used 3 times in Luke 1:39-45 concerning Mary at Elizabeth's house.

Mary returned home from visiting Elizabeth and eventually comes to Jerusalem, where she presents God the Son in the Temple [Luke 1:56; 2:21-22]

God would resurrect His Son, who had become enfleshed in Mary's womb and born to bring salvation to all mankind, to prove He is the eternal High Priest [Hebrews 4:14].

In Mary's appearances outside of heaven visionaries testify that she wears a blue veil.

In Revelation 12:1 John sees Mary in heaven. It is the same vision Juan Diego saw of Mary in 1531 — the Woman clothed with the sun and standing on the moon.

The Two Covenants compared: The Sinai Covenant and the New Covenant in Jesus Christ

THE OLD (SINAI) COVENANT (Hebrews 9:1-10)	THE NEW COVENANT (Hebrews 9:11-28)
Obsolete now that Christ has come Romans 10:4; Hebrews 8:13	A perfect covenant brought about by Christ Hebrews 7:19; 8:6-7, 13; 10:8-10;
Originated at Mt. Sinai Galatians 4:24-25	Originated from the heavenly Jerusalem Galatians 4:26-27
Blessings and punishments were temporal: brought judgment, death, condemnation 2 Corinthians 3:7-9	Blessings and punishments are eternal: brings eternal life Ephesians 2:1-13; Revelation 20:11-21:4
Impossible to obey perfectly because of human weakness and slavery to sin Romans 8:3; Galatians 3:23-24	Fulfilled perfectly by Christ Romans 10:4; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Galatians 3:25-27;
Established in the blood of sacrifice: In animal sacrifice the blood of the animal was separated from the body and both are offered in sacrifice. Required continual daily atonement for unintentional sins. There was no remedy for intentional sin because no animal was perfect enough to forgive mortal sin. With the exception of the whole burnt offerings, other sacrifices are eaten: Exodus 2:7; 24:5-11; 29:10-18; Leviticus 1:1-13; 6:17-22; 19:17; 7:6-7; Numbers 15:27-31; Hebrews 9:7; 10:1-4; Restricted access to God Exodus 30:10; Hebrews 9:7-8	Established in the blood of sacrifice: In the celebration of the first Eucharist Jesus separated His Body from His Blood [Luke 22:19-20] the sacrifice must be eaten [John 6:53-56]. Christ atoned for all sin once for all time and all humanity and His sacrifice has the power to cleanse the conscience. The application of His sacrifice is on-going as He stands before the Father as both our High Priest and the perfect Lamb of Sacrifice: Hebrews 9:12; 10:2, 22; Revelation 5:5-6; Christ opened access to God for all humanity Hebrews 9:15-16;

The Old Covenant Priesthood contrasted with the New Covenant High Priest in Hebrews chapters 5-8

Sons of Levi	God the Son
Service in the earthly "shadow" sanctuary	Service in the true heavenly sanctuary
Based on heredity	Based on divine Sonship and an unchangeable oath [Psalm 110:4]
Daily Sacrifices to atone for the debt of sin [the daily sacrifice of Exodus 29:38-42]	One perfect sacrifice offered in atonement and as a "surety" or guarantee for the debt of sin
Sacrifices offered for themselves (sinners)	One sacrifice offered of Himself (sinless)
Sacrifices only for the sins of Israel	One sacrifice for all men
Priesthood limited time of service	Eternal service
Temporal blessings	Eternal blessings
Death ended service	Death began service
EARTHLY SANCTUARY	HEAVENLY SANCTUARY
Made with human hands	Created by God
A copy and shadow of the heavenly reality	The true eternal sanctuary
Served by many mortal priests offering continual sacrifices	Served by one eternal priest offering one perfect sacrifice

From chapter 8:1 to 10:18 the inspired writer of Hebrews will make his argument for both the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant by presenting a series of contrasts:

- Contrasting the heavenly and the earthly Sanctuaries
- Contrasting the Old and the New Covenants
- Contrasting the old priesthood's repeated sacrifices and Christ's one eternal sacrifice

His focus will be the superiority of God's sworn oath [Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 6:13-17] over the old Law:

The Old Law established a priesthood full of human weaknesses offering repeated imperfect sacrifices and was established on an old covenant offering only temporal promises.

The Sworn Oath of the New Covenant establishes a divine Son who serves as a sinless priest-king offering one perfect and complete sacrifice and a new covenant established on eternal promises.

Old Testament Events in Genesis referenced in the New Testament

Event	Old Testament	New Testament
Creation of the Universe	Genesis chapter 1	John 1:136; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2-3; John 8:12
Creation of man and marriage of Adam and Eve	Genesis 1:26-2:7-24	1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 Corinthians 11:8-9; 1 Timothy 2:13; Colossians 3:10; Matthew 19:4;
Man given dominion over the earth	Genesis 1:28-31	James 3:7
Command not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the result of the disobedience being death	Genesis 2:17	Romans 6:23
The giving of the Tree of Life to man	Genesis 2:9	Revelation 2:7; 22:14
Temptation of the woman Eve by the Serpent	Genesis 3:1-7	2 Corinthians 11:3; James 1:15; Revelation 12:8-9
The disobedience of Adam and the fall of man	Genesis 3:6-12	Romans 5:12-14; 1Corinthians 15:22
The curse of man and the Serpent	Genesis 3:14-19	Romans 8:20; Revelation 12:2, 17
Sacrifices of Cain and Abel	Genesis 4:1-7	Hebrews 11:4
The murder of Abel and the curse of Cain	Genesis 4:8-16	Hebrews 12:24; 1 John 3:12
The birth of Seth	Genesis 4:25	Luke 3:38

Assumption of Enoch	Genesis 5:22-24	Hebrews 11:5
Righteousness of Noah	Genesis 6:8-9	Hebrews 11:7
The Great Flood	Genesis 7:17-8:22	Luke 17:27; Matthew 24:39
Salvation of Noah and his family	Genesis 7:17-8:22	1 Peter 3:18-21; 2 Peter 2:5
Sacrifice and atonement through the shedding of blood	Genesis 8:20-9:4; Genesis 22:1-2	Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 9:18-28
Genealogy of Shem son of Noah	Genesis chapter 10	Luke 3:35-36
The scattered nations of the Tower of Babel	Genesis 11:8-9	John 11:51-52
Birth of Abraham, descendant of Shem	Genesis 12:26	Matthew 1:1-2; Luke 3:34
Covenant with Abraham	Genesis 15:18; 17:2-21	Acts 3:25; 7:8-9; Galatians 3:15-18; Hebrews 11:8-19
Abraham's covenant ordeal	Genesis 22	Hebrews 11:17; James 2:21-22
Priesthood of Melchizedek & tithes to Melchizedek	Genesis 14:17-20	Hebrews 5:5-10; Hebrews 7:1-5
Abraham justified by faith	Genesis 12, 15, and 22	Romans 4:3; James 2:18-24
Ishmael son of Abraham	Genesis 16:15; 17:18-27; 21:8-21;	Galatians 4:21-31
Isaac son of Abraham	Genesis 21:5; chap. 22; chaps. 24-28; 31:18-31:9; 35:12-29; 46:1; 48:15-16; 49:31; 50:24	Matthew 1:2; 8:11; 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 3:34; 13:28; 20:37; Acts 3:13; 7:9-10, 32; Romans 9:7, 10; Galatians 4:28; Hebrews 11:9-20

Sarah	Genesis 17:16-17; 18:6-15; 20:2-18; 21:1-12; 23:1-19; 25:10	Romans 4:19; 9:9; Galatians 4:21-31; 1 Peter 3:6
Hagar	Genesis 16:1-16; 21:9-21; Galatians 4:21-31	25:12
Lot and Sodom	Genesis 18-19	Luke 17:28-29; 2 Peter 2:7
Offering of Isaac	Genesis 22	Hebrews 11:17-18; James 2:21
Covenant with Isaac and Jacob/Israel	Genesis 26:2-4; 35:11-15	Hebrews 8:8
Esau son sells his birthright	Genesis 25:29-34	Hebrews 11:16
Joseph's trials	Genesis 37-41	Acts 7:9-16
Jacob/Israel's prophecy concerning Judah	Genesis 49:8-12	Matthew 21:1-9; Hebrews 7:14; Revelation 7:14; 19:13

Some of the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ's death fulfilled in John's Gospel

Aspects of Jesus' Death in John's Gospel	Old Testament Reference
A result of obedience to the Father – 18:11	Psalms 40:8
Announced by Christ – 18:32 [3:14]	Numbers 21:8-9
Betrayed by a friend – John 13:18	Psalms 41:9
Died in place of His people – 18:14	Isaiah 53:4-6
Died with evildoers - 19:18	Isaiah 53:12
Was an innocent victim – 18:39; 19:5,7	Isaiah 53:9
Was crucified – 19:18	Psalms 22:16
Garment divided – 19:24	Psalms 22:18
Side pierced – 19:37	Zechariah 12:10
No bones broken – 19:33-37	Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20 (21)

Was buried in a rich man's tomb – 19:38-42

Isaiah 53:9

Healed by the Christ
lifted up on the cross – 3:14-17

Wisdom 16:5-7
(referencing Numbers 21:4-9)

Parallels between the visions of the Book of Revelation and the visions of the Book of the Prophet Daniel

THE VISION	DANIEL	REVELATION
1. Three and a half time period (a time, 2 times and ½ a time)	Chapter 12:7	Chapter 11:9, 11
2. The 10 horns	Chapter 7:8	Chapters 12:3, 13:1; 17:3, 8
3. The Leopard, the Bear, and the Lion	Chapter 7:4-6	Chapter 13:2
4. The Beast mouthing boasting and blasphemies	Chapter 7:8,11	Chapter 13:5
5. The war against the Saints	Chapter 7:21	Chapter 13:7
6. The worship of the Beast's statue	Chapter 3:5-7, 15	Chapter 13:15
7. The Son of Man coming on the Glory-Cloud	Chapter 7:13	Chapter 1:7 & 14:14

Parallels between the visions of the Book of Revelation and the visions of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

THE VISION	EZEKIEL	REVELATION
1. The throne vision	Chapter 1	Chapter 4
2. The book being opened	Chapters 2-3	Chapter 5
3. The four plagues	Chapter 5	Chapter 6:1-8
4. Those slain under the altar	Chapter 6	Chapter 6:9-11
5. The wrath of God	Chapter 7	Chapter 6:12-17
6. The seal on the Saint's foreheads	Chapter 9	Chapter 7
7. The coals from the altar	Chapter 10	Chapter 8
8. The 1/3 destruction	Chapter 5:1-4 & 12	Chapter 8:6-12
9. No more delay	Chapter 12	Chapter 10:1-7
10. The eating of the book	Chapter 2	Chapter 10:8-11
11. Prophecy against the Nations	Chapters 25-32	Chapter 10:11
12. The measuring of the Temple	Chapters 40-43	Chapter 11:1-2

13. Comparing Jerusalem to Sodom	Chapter 16	Chapter 11:8
14. The cup of wrath	Chapter 23	Chapter 14
15. The vine of the land	Chapter 15	Chapter 14:18-20
16. The great harlot	Chapters 16, 23	Chapters 17-18
17. The lament sung over the city	Chapter 27	Chapter 18
18. The scavenger's feast	Chapter 39	Chapter 19
19. The first resurrection	Chapter 37	Chapter 20:4-6
20. The Battle of Gog and Magog	Chapter 38-39	Chapter 20:7-9
21. The New Jerusalem	Chapters 40-48	Chapter 21
22. The River of Life	Chapter 47	Chapter 22

The Importance of Jonah in the Gospels

In the Gospel of Matthew Jonah is referenced 6 times in 5 verses:

1. **12:39** *The only sign it will be given is the sign of the prophet Jonah.*
2. **12:40** *For Jonah remained in the belly of the sea-monster for 3 days and 3 nights, so will the Son of man be in the heart of the earth for 3 days and 3 nights.*
3. and 4. **12:41** (twice) *On judgment day the men of Nineveh will appear against this generation and they will be its condemnation, because when Jonah preached they repented; and look, there is something greater than Jonah here.*
5. **16:4** *It is an evil and unfaithful generation, and the only sign it will be given is the sign of Jonah.*
6. **16:17** *Jesus replied, Simon son of Jonah, you are a blessed man because it was no human agency who revealed this to you but my Father in heaven.*

In the Gospel of Luke Jonah is referenced 4 times in 3 verses:

1. **11:29** The crowds got even bigger and he addressed them, 'This is an evil generation, it is asking for a sign. The only sign it will be given is the sign of Jonah ...'
2. **11:30** For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so

will the Son of man be a sign to this generation.

3. and 4. **11:32** On judgment day the men of Nineveh will appear against this generation and be its condemnation, because when Jonah preached they repented, and look, there is something greater than Jonah here.

The Seven Annual Sacred Feasts of the Old Covenant, the Feasts of Remembrance

THE SEVEN SACRED ANNUAL FEASTS OF THE OLD COVENANT: The Feasts of Remembrance * = Pilgrim feasts: Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Deuteronomy 16:1-16			
SACRED FEAST	OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	OLD TESTAMENT / MODERN TIME	DESCRIPTION Old Testament and application New Testament
PASSOVER (begins the liturgical year) (PESACH) -Signified the Redemption of Israel	Ex 12:1-4; Lev 23:5; Num 9:1-14; 28:16 Dt 16:1-3, 4-7; Mt 26:17; Mk 14:12-26; Jn 2:13; 11:55; 1 Cor 5:7; Heb 11:28	14 th Aviv (Nisan) Mar./Apr.	Old Testament: Slaying and eating a lamb or kid, Remembering Israel's deliverance from death, the 10 th plague. N.T.= last legitimate Old Covenant Passover sacrifice
* UNLEVENED BREAD (HAG HAMATZOT) -Signified the Sanctification of	Ex 12:15-20; 39; Ex 13:3-10; Ex 23:15; Ex 34:18; Lev 23:6-8; Num 28:17-25; Dt	15-21 Aviv (Nisan) Mar./Apr. 7 day feast	Old Testament: Eating the Passover sacrifice in a sacrificial meal. This feast lasted

the Israel	16:3, 4, 8; Mk 14:1,12; Act 12:3; 1 Cor 5:6-8	7 days (8 if Passover is counted) in which eating bread with yeast (the symbol of sin) is forbidden. Remembering how Yahweh redeemed Israel out of Egypt in haste and that they are called to be a "holy people". Making designated daily offerings. N.T.= The Last Supper/first Eucharistic sacrifice and the Crucifixion
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FIRSTFRUITS (YOM HABIKKURIM) This feast is no longer observed in Rabbinic Judaism (only the "firstfruits" of the wheat harvest at the Feast of Weeks is observed today) -Signified Resurrection of Israel as a free people	Ex 23:19; 34:26; Lev 23:9-14; Deut. 26:5,9-10; Matt 28:1; Mk 16:1-2; Lk 24:1; Jn 1:20; Ro 8:23; 1 Cor 15:20-23	The day after the first Sabbath after Passover (Lev. 23:11) = Sunday Aviv = March/April	Old Testament: Presenting a sheaf of the first barley harvest as a wave offering; making a burnt offering and a grain offering. Recognizing the redemption of the first-born in Egypt and recognizing God's bounty in the Promised Land. N.T. = Resurrection
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			Sunday
<p>*WEEKS (PENTECOST=50th day in Greek) (SHAVUOT or HAG HASHAVUOT) also known as FEAST OF THE HARVEST (HAG HAKATZIR) -Signified the Origination of Israel as the Covenant people Of Yahweh</p>	<p>Ex 23:16; 34:22a; Lev 23:15-21; Num 28:26-31; Dt 16:9-12; Act 2:1-4; 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8</p>	<p>Sivan May/June 50 days after Firstfruits = on a Sunday</p>	<p>Old Testament: A festival of joy; mandatory and voluntary offerings including the firstfruits of the wheat harvest. Recalling the giving of the Law at Sinai 50 days after crossing the Red Sea and thankfulness for the Lord's blessings and birth of the O.T. Church. N.T.=birth of New Covenant Church</p>

THE LONG SUMMER HARVEST

<p>TRUMPETS (ROSH HASHANA) beginning of the civil year. -Signified the calling Israel to judgment</p>	<p>Lev 23:23-25; Num 29:1-6; 2Sam 6:15; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thes. 4-16</p>	<p>1 Tishri Sept/Oct</p>	<p>Old Testament: Ingathering of the nation of Israel. A sacred assembly and a day of rest commemorated with trumpet blasts and sacrifices. Israel presents itself before the Lord for his favour. N.T. = The</p>
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Second Coming of Christ?

DAY OF
ATONEMENT
(YOM KIPUR)
-Signified the
Atonement of the
Covenant people

Lev 16:1-34;
23:26-32; Num
29:7-11;
Ro 3:24-26;
Heb 9:7; 10:3,
30-31; 10:19-
22; Act 27:9;
2Ptr 3:7; Rev
17:4 & 20:12

10 Tishri
Sept/Oct

Old Testament:
A day of rest,
fasting and
sacrifices of
atonement for
priests and
people and
atonement for
the tabernacle
and altar.
Cleanse people
and priests and
people from their
sins and purify
the Holy Place in
the Temple.
N.T.= The Great
Judgment ?

*TABERNACLES
also called FEAST
OF SHELTERS
OR BOOTHS
(SUKKOTH)
-Signified God's
presence with His
Covenant people;
looked forward to
the coming of the
Messiah

Ex 23:16b;
34:22b;
Lev 23:33-38;
39-43;
Num 29:12-34;
Dt 16:13-15; 1
Kings 8:3 &
65; 2 Chr 7:1;
Zec 14:16-19;
Jn 7:2;
Mt24:35; 2 Pt
3:7, 10 &13;
Rev 21:1

15-22 Tishri
Sept/Oct
8 day feast

Old Testament:
A week of
celebration for
the fruit harvest
(grapes &
olives); living in
booths and
offering
sacrifices.
Memorializes
the giving of the
Tabernacle and
giving thanks for
the productivity
of the land.
NT = Creation of
the new heaven
& earth?

* The 3 pilgrim Feasts: every Israelite male, 13 years or older, must present himself to Yahweh three times a year at the Temple in Jerusalem at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (the 7 day feast following the Passover sacrifice), the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and at the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths); see Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Deuteronomy 16:16 & 2 Chronicles 8:13. The first three feasts: Passover (which begins the liturgical year), the Feast Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Firstfruits all fall in the same month within an 8 day period. The last three feasts: the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles (which ends the liturgical year), also falls within the same month, with the Feast of Tabernacles covering an 8-day period. **If** the 7 Sacred Feasts are a blueprint for God's plan of salvation then we are presently in the period of "the long summer harvest", and the laborers in God's vineyard are gathering souls into God's storehouse of heaven. Colossians 2:16-17:

*Then never let anyone criticize you for what you eat or drink, or about observance of annual festivals, New Moons or Sabbaths. **These are only a shadow of what was coming: the reality is the body of Christ.***

Additional Sacred Feasts

Weekly Feast of the Sabbath: The Sabbath is the 7th day of the week, commemorating the 7th day of Creation when God "rested" and was set aside as a special day of rest for the people to worship and commune with God. It was the only day of the week that was named. The Sabbath obligation was first announced in Exodus 16:23-29 in the wilderness on the way to Sinai and was associated with the event of the giving of the manna, which prefigured the Most Holy Eucharist. Other references to this obligation are repeated in Exodus 20:8-11 (10 Commandments); 31:13-16 (repeated after the sin of the Golden Calf); 35:2-3; Leviticus 23:3; and numerous references throughout the Old and New Testaments. Sacrifices: The 2 the daily Tamid lambs were doubled (see Numbers 28:4-10) and were accompanied by the prescribed wheat cake and wine libation.

Periodic Feasts (monthly and holy year feasts):

New Moon Feasts: A calendar feast which marked the beginning of each lunar month, celebrated with sacrifices and feasting. The official calendar of the covenant people was a lunar calendar and was designated by a religious or liturgical calendar which began in the spring with the month of Nisan or the civil calendar which began in the month of Tishri in the early fall. All religious feasts were commanded to be determined by the lunar calendar, even in Jesus' time when it had been determined that the solar calendar was more accurate. In

addition to the daily Tamid, sacrifices included a goat offered as a sacrifice for sin along with its accompanying wine libation. Also offered for each New Moon sacrifice were: 2 young bulls, 1 ram and 7 yearling lambs without blemish. A grain offering accompanied each sacrifice: for a bull three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; for each ram, two-tenths of fine flour mixed with oil; for each lamb one-tenth of fine flour mixed with oil. A libation of half a hin of wine accompanied the sacrifice from a bull, one-third of a hin for a ram and one-quarter of a hin for a lamb. Numbers 10:10; 28:11-15; 1 Samuel 20:18; 1 Chronicles 23:31; 2 Chronicles 4:8; 8:13; 31:3; Ezra 3:5; Nehemiah 10:33; Isaiah 1:13-14; Ezekiel 45:17; 46:3; Hosea 2:11, 13; Amos 8:5; Colossians 2:16.

Sabbath Year Feasts

Every 7th year was designated a Sabbath year of the Lord in which the land "rested." The obligations for the Sabbath year are found in Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:1-7; 18-22; and Deuteronomy 15:1-11: the land must be "at rest" and cannot be sown nor can vines be pruned for a year. This holy year feast reminded the people that the land belonged to Yahweh. In addition to the rest for the land, all Israelites held as slaves were released from bondage in the 7th year and debts were forgiven; although there is some confusion as to whether this release from bondage was always in the Sabbath year or in the 7th year from when the Israelite was placed in bondage [also see Nehemiah 10:32].

Jubilee Feasts

Scholars do not agree on how the date of this feast was determined, whether the 49th or 50th year. For me the Biblical account is clear: counting 7 weeks of years, or 49 years from the last Sabbath year, on the change of the civil year in the fall during the Feast Trumpets the 49th year becomes the 7th Sabbath year. Then, 10 days after the New Year celebrated on the Feast of Trumpets, the 50th year is proclaimed on the Feast of Atonement and is celebrated as the beginning of the year long Jubilee. This arrangement allowed the Jubilee year to fall on a Sabbath year and helped to adjust the shorter lunar calendar; otherwise there would be two continuous years of no sowing of the fields and no harvest. This feast provided a holy year of liberation in which the observances of the Sabbath year were enforced in addition to the return of the land to its original tribal owner. This holy feast allowed the Israelites to show the same mercy to each other that Yahweh had shown to them in the event of the Exodus: captives were liberated, debts were forgiven, and Yahweh's land was "at rest" to be given to the covenant people again the next year. This holy year observance assured that social justice was maintained among the covenant people. Jesus declared a

divine Jubilee in the first year of His ministry when He quoted from Isaiah 61:1-2. Only a king of Israel or a High Priest could proclaim a Jubilee year. Jesus announced He was the Messianic Davidic heir when He proclaimed a divine Jubilee in Luke 4:16-22 [see Leviticus 25:9-52; 27:17-25; Numbers 36:2-4]. Both the 7 yearly Sabbath Year Feast and the Jubilee Feasts were dropped by the covenant people soon after taking possession of the Promised Land. Greed and a lack of social conscience led to the failure to observe these feasts. It was for this reason that Yahweh commended a 70 year exile for Judah to atone for the 490 years of failure to keep the Sabbath Year Feasts. The people owed Yahweh 70 Sabbath years and so the land lay fallow for 70 years before the return from exile. There is no evidence that the Babylonians brought any other group of people into the Holy Land to occupy the land in those 70 years.

National Feasts inaugurated by the people and not by Yahweh

Purim (Adar = February/March), which celebrates the salvation of the Jews from gentile persecution in the Book of Esther (Esther 9:18-32).

Hanukkah (or Chanukah), celebrated in the month of Kislev (December). The feast of the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem described in 1 Maccabee 4:52-59 and 2 Maccabee 10:6-8.

Purim and Hanukkah are **not** festivals ordained by God but are instead festivals proclaimed by the people to celebrate an historical event which demonstrated God's divine intervention and protection of the Covenant people. Jesus observed the Feast of Hanukkah in John 10:22.

Please note that sometime shortly after the resurrection of Christ the Jewish religious authority adjusted the dates of the annual Feast of Firstfruits and the next feast which was celebrated 50 days from Firstfruits, the Feast of Pentecost. They began to celebrate the Feast of Firstfruits on the day **after** the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the 16th of Nisan so that feast would not be fulfilled in Jesus' Resurrection from the dead. This meant that from that time on Firstfruits and Pentecost would no longer fall annually on a Sunday. The "great Sabbath" of Passover week was also then considered to be the week prior to the week long feast instead of in the midst of that holy week.

However, the Karaite sect of Judaism, which claims descent from the Sadducees, continues to celebrate Firstfruits on the day after the first Sabbath of Passover week, **on a Sunday**, and Pentecost on a Sunday 50 days later just as commanded in Leviticus 23:11. The Karaites are also the only Jews who continue to celebrate the Feast of Firstfruits. Both Orthodox and Reform Jews count Pentecost as 50 days from the 16th of Nisan. For verification of this

change see Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 13.8.4 (252) where this first century AD Jewish historian and former Old Covenant Priest writes:

"And truly he did not speak falsely in saying so; for the festival, which we call Pentecost, did then fall out to be the next day to the Sabbath ..."

Josephus offers evidence that the festival of Pentecost used to always fall on a Sunday, the day next to the Sabbath which was Saturday. The feast of Pentecost was determined by counting 7 times 7 weeks from the Feast of Firstfruits and the 50th day would then be the Feast of Pentecost. Josephus' statement means that Firstfruits also used to be celebrated on a Sunday [see Leviticus 23:11], foreshadowing God's plan that the Christ should be resurrected on the Feast of Firstfruits on a Sunday and that the birth of the New Covenant Church would be on the Sunday of the Feast of Pentecost!

Parallels between the visions of the Book of Revelation and the visions of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

THE VISION	EZEKIEL	REVELATION
1. The Throne Vision	Chapter 1	Chapter 4
2. The Book Being Opened	Chapters 2-3	Chapter 5
3. The Four Plagues	Chapter 5	Chapter 6:1-8
4. Those Slain Under the aAltar	Chapter.6	Chapter 6:9-11
5. The Wrath of God	Chapter 7	Chapter 6:12-17
6. The Seal on the Saint's Foreheads	Chapter 9	Chapter 7
7. The Coals from the Altar	Chapter.10	Chapter 8
8. The 1/3 Destruction	Chapter 5:1-4 and 12	Chapter 8:6-12
9. No More Delay	Chapter 12	Chapter 10:1-7
10. The Eating of the Book	Chapter 2	Chapter 10:8-11
11. Prophecy against the Nations	Chapters 25-32	Chapter 10:11
12. The Measuring of the Temple	Chapters 40-43	Chapter 11:1-2
13. Comparing Jerusalem to Sodom	Chapter 16	Chapter 11:8

14. The Cup of Wrath	Chapter 23	Chapter 14
15. The Vine of the Land	Chapter 15	Chapter 14:18-20
16. The Great Harlot	Chapters 16, 23	Chapters 17-18
17. The Lament Sung Over the City	Chapter 27	Chapter 18
18. The Scavenger's Feast	Chapter 39	Chapter 19
19. The First Resurrection	Chapter 37	Chapter 20:4-6
20. The Battle of Gog and Magog	Chapter 38-39	Chapter 20:7-9
21. The New Jerusalem	Chapters 40-48	Chapter 21
22. The River of Life	Chapter 47	Chapter 22

Parallels between the visions of the Book of Revelation and the visions of the Prophet Daniel

THE VISION	DANIEL	REVELATION
1. Three and a half time period (a time, 2 times and ½ a time)	Chapter 12:7	Chapter 11:9, 11
2. The ten horns	Chapter 7:8	Chapters 12:3, 13:1; 17:3, 8
3. The Leopard, the Bear, and the Lion	Chapter 7:4-6	Chapter 13:2
4. The Beast mouthing boasting and blasphemies	Chapter 7:8, 11	Chapter 13:5
5. The war against the Saints	Chapter 7:21	Chapter 13:7
6. The worship of the Beast's statue	Chapter 3:5-7, 15	Chapter 13:15
7. The Son of Man coming on the Glory-Cloud	Chapter 7:13	Chapter 1:7 and 14:14

Symbolic Images of the Old Testament Prophets

Image Groups	Part I Covenant Relationship	Part II Rebellion	Part III Redemptive Judgment	Part IV Restoration Fulfilled
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Covenant Marriage	Israel Bride of Yahweh	Unfaithful adulteress/harlot	Humiliated, abused & abandoned by lovers	The Bride restored to her Bridegroom
[examples in Scripture]	Ezekiel 16:4-14; Isaiah 61:10-11; Jeremiah 2:2	Ezekiel 16:15-34; 23:1-12; Isaiah 1:21; Jeremiah 3:6-8; 13:22-23, 26; 23:10; Hosea 4:10-14	Ezekiel 16:23-61; 23:35-49; Amos 4:7-8; Jeremiah 3:1b-2; 4:30-31; Hosea 2:4- 15	John 3:28- 29; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2, 9; 22:17
Vineyard or Fig tree	Well-tended vineyard/fruitful fig tree	Vines grow wild/failure to produce fruit	Weeds overgrow vineyard/ ruin and destruction	Vines are replanted/ fruitfulness restored
[examples in Scripture]	Isaiah 5:1-4; Ezekiel 19:10-11; Jeremiah 24:4-7	Jeremiah 2:21; Hosea 2:14; Micah 7:1-4; Joel 1:7; 11-12;	Isaiah 5:3-6; Ezekiel 19:12-14; Jeremiah 8:13; Nahum 3:12-15	John 15:1-2, 4-6
Animals	Domesticated animals obedient to the Master's yoke	Resist the yoke; run away and become wild	Ravaged by wild beasts/ birds of prey	Rescued by their Master
[examples in Scripture]	Micah 4:13; Isaiah 40:10-11; 65:25;	Isaiah 50:6; 53:6; Jeremiah 5:5d-6; 8:6b-7; 23:1-2; Ezekiel 19:1-9	Isaiah 50:7; Jeremiah	Matthew 11:28-30; John 1:29,

Drinking Wine [examples in Scripture]	Ezekiel 34:15-16		8:15-17; 50:6-7; Hosea 8:1-14; 13:6-8	36; 10:1-18; Hebrews 3:20; Revelation 5:6, 13; 7:9-17; 14:1-10; 19:2-9; 21:9-23; 22:1-3
	Joy of drinking good wine	Becoming drunk	Loss of wine; drinking the "cup of God's wrath"	Rejoicing in the best "new wine" at the Master's table
	Jeremiah 40:12; Isaiah 62:8-9	Isaiah 5:11-12; 28:1; Jeremiah 8:13; 48:26; 51:7; Joel 1:5	Joel 4:13/3:13; Isaiah 51:17; 63:2-3; Jeremiah 13:12-14; 25:15-31; 48:26; Ezekiel 23:32-33	Promise: Zech.9:15-16 Filled: Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32; Revelation 19:7-9

The Liberation of the Exodus expressed in the Jubilee Year of Grace

Jubilee Liberation	Exodus Liberation
1. the land would be redeemed and all land debts forgiven [Leviticus 25:13-17]	1. God redeemed the "firstborn" of Israel [Exodus 12:1-34]
2. all Israelite slaves are to be freed [Leviticus 25:35-55]	2. God freed Israel from slavery in Egypt [Exodus 12:37-51]
3. the land would revert to the tribal	3. God gave Israel the Promised Land

family entrusted with it [Leviticus 25:10, 23-34] [Joshua 3-4].

The “New Exodus” Liberation fulfilled in Jesus Christ

Liberation	Fulfilled in Christ
1. the debt of the curses incurred for failing to keep the Old Covenant Law were forgiven	Galatians 3:13 <i>"Christ ransomed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, 'Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree..'"</i>
2. He freed us from slavery to sin and death	Romans 6:6 <i>"We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin."</i>
3. Through His death, burial, and Resurrection we received the promise of eternal life in the true Promise Land, the Kingdom of Heaven.	Luke 23:42-43 <i>"Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied to him, 'Amen, I say to you. Today you will be with me in Paradise.'"</i>

The Two Eve's Contrasted

THE VIRGIN EVE	THE VIRGIN MARY
Daughter of the first Covenant between God and Adam	Daughter of the Sinai Covenant
Pledged obedience under the covenant	Pledged obedience under the covenant
Eve's disobedience resulted in the fall into sin of the entire human race. The result was death, physically and spiritually.	Mary's obedience to God resulted in the offer of the gift of salvation to the entire human race. The result was eternal life
Eve's name means the "mother of all living" and indeed all of humanity is descended through her.	Mary became the "mother of all who truly live" when at the cross, Jesus gave His mother to the Church as the Mother of all who come to receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord and therefore receive the gift of eternal life.

The Tower of Babel compared with the Second Pentecost

Tower of Babel Genesis 11	Second Pentecost Acts 2
1. Confusion of tongues [Genesis 11:9]	1. Reversal of Babel: tongues are understood [Acts 2: 5-10]
2. God scattered the people in judgment to the four corners of the earth [Genesis 11:8].	2. People will scatter to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to bring into the Covenant the harvest of souls from every corner of the earth [Acts 1:8]
4. Language is used to promote a human agenda: "Let's make a name for ourselves..." [Genesis 11:4]	3. Language is used as a "sign" to announce the mighty works of God.
5.	
4. Results in dis-unity [Genesis 11:8]	4. Results in unity

Yahweh's Eight Covenants

COVENANT	SIGN	SCRIPTURE
1. Adam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fertility dominion over the earth 	Tree of Life	Genesis 1:28-30: <i>"God blessed them, saying to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it..."</i> Genesis 2:15-17: <i>"Yahweh God took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it..."</i>
2. Noah and the earth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The earth will never be destroyed by flood waters again (water will become a sign of salvation) 	Rainbow	Genesis 6:18; 9:9-17; Sirach 44:17-18. <i>"God spoke as follows to Noah and his sons, 'I am now establishing (maintaining) my covenant with you and with your descendants to come..."</i> Genesis 9:8-9

3. Abraham = 3-fold,
(continues with Isaac,
Jacob and descendants)

- and, nation
(descendants) and
world wide
blessing

Circumcision
on the 8th day

Genesis 12:3, 15:1-18, 17: 1-27,
18:18 and 22:18, 26:3-5, 28:10-14;
Exodus 2:24; Sirach 44:19-20. *"God
remembered his covenant with
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."*
Exodus 2:24

4. Moses and Israel

- Sinai
Covenant
establishing
divine liturgy and
covenant
sacraments

Ark of the
Covenant
Tabernacle
Ten
Commandments

Exodus 19-24; 34:10, 27, 28;
Deuteronomy 5:2-3. *"So now,
if you are really prepared to obey
me and keep my covenant, you, out
of all peoples, shall be my personal
possession"* Exodus 19:5

5. Aaron and Sons

- perpetual
ministerial
priesthood of the
Levites

Salt

Exodus 40:15; Leviticus 2:13;
Numbers 18:19; Sirach 45:7;
Jeremiah 33:21. *"Everything the
Israelites set aside for Yahweh from
the holy things, I give to you and
your sons and daughters, by
perpetual decree. This is a covenant
of salt for ever before Yahweh, for
you and your descendants too."*
Numbers 18:19

6. Phinehas

- perpetual
priesthood in
Covenant of
Peace

Seamless robe
and miter

Numbers 25:11-15; Sirach 45:24.
*"To him I grant my covenant of
peace. To him and his descendants
after him, this covenant will assure
the priesthood for ever."*
Numbers 25:12-13

(prefigures Christ)

7. David and descendants		2 Samuel 7:11-17, 23:5; Sirach 45:25. <i>"Yes, my House stands firm with God: He has made an eternal covenant with me..."</i> 2 Samuel 23:5
• dynasty and throne forever secure	Throne / Temple	
8. Jesus (Yah-shua = Yahweh saves or I save) also written Yehosua = Joshua.		Isaiah 55:3; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 12:24. <i>"...This cup is the new covenant in my blood poured out for you."</i> Luke 22:20 <i>"...This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me."</i> 1 Corinthians 11:25
• He is the fulfillment of all the covenantal promises	The Cross, the true "Tree of Life"	

* There are many more Scripture passages referring to Yahweh's Eight Covenants than those listed in the chart. Some additional Scripture references for the various covenants are listed below:

Adam: Hosea 6:7 [can be translated "They have broken the covenant like Adam..". The word "adam" can mean the first man "Adam", or "man", or even "ground" or "earth"]. In Genesis 6:18: the Hebrew word "quwm" can also be translated "restore" , "continue", or "maintain" which is why most scholars assume the first covenant was established with Adam and then continued with Noah. If there was no covenant there would be no covenant obligations or violations of the covenant.

Noah: Genesis 6:18; 9:9, 11, 12 (twice), 13, 15, 16, 17; Sirach 44:17-18; Isaiah 24:5

Abraham (and descendants): Genesis 15:18; 17:2, 4, 7 (twice), 9, 10 (twice); 17:11, 13 (twice), 14, 19 (twice), 21: 31:44; Exodus 2:24; 6:2-5; Leviticus 26: 42-45; 2 Kings 13:23; 17:15, 35, 38; 18:12; 23:2, 3 (three times), 21; 1 Chronicles 16:15-17; Sirach 44:19-20; Psalm 105:9; Acts 3:25; 7:8

Mosaic Covenant with Israel: Exodus 19:5; 24:7, 8; 31:16; 34:10, 27, 28; Leviticus 24:8-9; 26:9, 15, 25, 42 (3 times), 44, 45; Deuteronomy 4:13, 23, 31; 5:2-3; 7:9,12; 8:18; 9:9, 11, 15; 17:2; 29:1, 9, 12 (twice), 14, 21, 25 (twice);

31:16, 20; 33:9; Joshua 7:11, 15; 23:16; Judges 2:1, 20; 1 Kings 8:9, 21, 23; 19:10-11; 2 Chronicles 6:11, 14; 34:30, 31 (twice), 32; Psalm 105:10; 106:45; Isaiah 42:6; 54:10

Aaron and sons: Exodus 40:15; Leviticus 2:13; 18:19; Numbers 18:19; Nehemiah 13:25; Sirach 45:7, 15; Jeremiah 33:21; Malachi 2:4-9

Phinehas: Numbers 25:11-13; Sirach 45:24; Psalm 106:30-31 (an example of righteousness for the ages)

David: 2 Samuel 7:11-17; 23:5; 23:5 Sirach 45:25; 47:11; 2 Chronicles 7:18; 13:5; 21:7; Psalm 89:3, 28, 34, Jeremiah 33:21

Jesus: Isaiah 59:20-21 [Romans 11:26-27]; Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6-14; Galatians 4:24; Hebrews 7:22; 8:6-13; 9:15-20; 10:14-29 (quoting Jeremiah 31:31-34); 12:24; 13:20

The Dead Sea Scrolls for Information Only

Comparing between the most numerous copies of Old Testament Texts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls and the most quoted Old Testament passages in the New Testament.

Top 10 Old Testament references found in the New Testament		Top 10 Old Testament texts found at Qumran (number of copies found in the Dead Sea Scrolls)	
1. Psalms	79	1. Psalms	34
2. Isaiah	66	2. Deuteronomy	27
3. Deuteronomy	54	3. Isaiah	24
4. Exodus	44	4. Genesis	20
5. Genesis	39	5. Exodus	14
6. Minor Prophets	30	6. Leviticus	9
7. Leviticus	17	7. Daniel	8
8. Daniel	5	8. Minor Prophets	8
9. Jeremiah	5	9. Jeremiah	6

Eschatology in the Gospel of John

John chapters 1 - 4

As postmillennial partial preterist, I observed that the Gospel of John begins declaring Christ and His followers to be the new-covenant creation foretold in the old-testament scriptures:

“In many more ways, Edenic imagery is taken up and expanded in the New Testament, which records the fulfilment of the promises of the New Creation in Christ. An obvious passage, of course, is John’s prologue (John 1:1-18), which begins where Genesis does: “In the beginning.” We see the same concepts – the Word, creation, life, the light shining in darkness and overcoming it; and John says of Christ that He dwelt (literally, *tabernacled*) among us, and we beheld His glory” (John 1:14; cf. Ex. 40:34). John’s point here is to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is the full revelation of God’s presence with His people (cf. Matt. 1:23). But John’s entire Gospel is built on Old Testament imagery. For example, the passage following his Prologue (John 1:19-2:11) **contains a subtle, seven-day structure that is meant to remind us of the original seven days of creation (as well as numerous other Old Testament parallels).**

On the first day, John the Baptist appears as “a *voice* of one crying in the *wilderness*” (1:23; cf. Gen. 1:2-3). The next day, as Jesus is baptized (baptism is a recapitulation of two Old Testament re-creation events: the Flood [1Pet. 3:20-21] and the Red Sea crossing [1Cor. 10:1-2]), the Spirit descends with wings, hovering and fluttering over the waters of the New Creation – and He comes as a dove, the winged messenger that announced to Noah the re-creation of the world 91:32-33; cf. gen. 8:11). The passage continues with other creation-images, and turning the *water* (cf. Gen.1:2ff.) into wine – the *best* wine (John 2:1-11). The blessing is superabundant, more than is necessary (about 150 gallons), as a forerunner of the promised blessings of the Garden which would come through Him (Gen. 49:10-12; Isa. 25:6; Amos 9:13-14; Jer.33:10-11). Just before He does this, He mentions the hour of His Atonement. And thus, by this miracle on the Seventh Day, Jesus “manifested His glory” (John 2:11) – just as God had done by His enthronement in the Cloud on the first Sabbath. But when God is seated at rest upon His throne, He sits as Judge, examining His Creation-Temple; and when He first found wickedness therein, He cleansed it, banishing the offenders (Gen. 3:24). Similarly, the next event in John’s Gospel shows the Lord assessing the Temple and coming in Judgment against those who defiled it (John 2:12-22). (The Sabbath is when we appear before God’s throne of

judgment to be examined; and if we are approved, we enter into His Rest [Heb. 3-4]). The people in the Temple on this Sabbath were guilty, and He banished them in a terrifying- and noisy - manifestation of judgment; an image of the first and final Days of the Lord (see below, Chapter 15).

He then declared His body – Himself personally and His Body the Church – to be the true Temple (John 2:18-22), for the physical resurrection of Christ’s body is the foundation for His people’s being constituted as the Temple (Ephesians 1:20; 2:5-6, 19-22; 1Cor. 3:10-11, 16-17). As God’s Temple, the Church is re-admitted to Eden and filled with the Spirit and glory of God (Ex. 40:34; Num. 9:15; Joel 2:28-31; Acts 2:1-4, 16-21). The Church is God’s new Garden-Temple, restored to God’s original mandate for man: to have dominion over the earth, expanding the Garden until it covers the whole earth. In remaking us in His image, God has given us His presence. He has taken up residence in His Temple, and has promised to be with us as we fulfill His command to the ends of the earth (Matt.28:18-20).”

The Holy Spirit “overshadowing” or “brooding” over Marry while Jesus is being conceived in her womb (Lk.1:35) is (Gen.1:2) language communicating that Jesus is the true and eternal new creation. Indeed He is the cosmic tabernacle/temple (Jn.1:14) and the “last Adam” (1Cor.15:45) who has come to give to man what Adam never achieved “eternal life” -- a predominant theme in John. Thus all those who put their faith in Him will abide in Him as the new creation of God. Jesus is the anti-type to the rivers of water that flowed in the Garden of Eden making the hearts of men a Garden producing the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Jn.4:10ff/Jn.7:38/Ezk.47/Rev.21-22:12; Isa.35, Isa.44, Gals.5). He is also the antitype to the glory of the gold and precious medals described in Eden, because He imparts the wealth of His righteousness to lost sinners. Jesus in John 3 tells us how one enters this new creation or the kingdom. One needs to be “born from above” where the new-covenant life comes from in order to “see the kingdom” (Jn.3:3). Jesus taught that when the kingdom would come in its fullness associated with His return in their “this generation,” it would not come with physical observation but ***be realized in the realm of being “within” the person*** (Lk.21:20-37/Lk.21:27-32). Unlike many humanist religious teachings both ancient and modern, Jesus clearly teaches man is not neutral and left to himself “hates” God/Jesus/Light and will not come (in faith) to Him unless God sovereignly causes him to be born from above and thus enables him to “see” (believe in) His teachings (cf. 6:44). Those who believed in Jesus during His earthly ministry had the “already” aspect of “eternal life” but those who rejected Jesus, the wrath of God abided upon them verse 36. There is also a corporate aspect to the old-covenant kingdom needing to be born again or transformed into the new, of which Nicodemus whom was a teacher of Israel

should have understood from the teachings of (Ezk.36-37; Isa.44:1-4). Jesus Himself was not born again until His resurrection (Acts 13:33; Col.1:18). *The Church as a corporate body* and the restored new Israel of God needed to recapitulate what Christ had undergone and “fill up what was lacking in the sufferings of Christ” and thus be raised, transformed, and born again as well – this occurring in A.D. 70. Both John the Baptist and Paul could be considered the “best man” of Jesus introducing and betrothing the bride to the Groom (Jn.3:29; 2Cor.11:2). John is preparing the Jewish side of the bride to meet Jesus through repentance, whereas Paul the gentile - together they become “the Bride.” John the Baptist has ushered in the “last days” and God is “betrothing” His Bride in the “wilderness” (Hos.2:14-19; 3:5).

1) *“Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the **hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem,** worship the Father. “You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (Jn.4:21-24)*

Jesus is referring to the judgment upon Jerusalem when He mentions “an hour is coming” as the “not yet” of His eschatology here in discussing a mountain and temple worship with the Samaritan woman. Jesus’ answer is a post A.D.70 answer concerning a time when a localized place of temple worship will be meaningless (Jn.4:19-21; cf. Hebs.9:6-10; Heb.12). There are other eschatological themes such as the harvest which brings with it the Great Commission and resurrection motifs. There is only one new-covenant “harvest” and it involves the harvesting of souls unto “eternal life” and would occur at the end of the old-covenant “*this* age” Jesus and His audience were living in (Jn.4:35ff./Mt.3:10-12/Mt.13:37-43). There are not two different kinds of harvests, one evangelistic and spiritual and the other involving a literal resurrection of corpses at the end of time. John in Revelation describes the end of the same harvest at the end of the old-covenant age as something that would “shortly” take place and was “at hand” (Rev.1:1, 3 --Rev.14-- Rev.22:7, 10, 12, 20). Jesus also instructs us that “salvation is of the Jews” (Jn.4:22) therefore this further confirms the harvest/resurrection occurs at the end of “Jews” old-covenant age. The resurrection/harvest theme is coinciding with the Bride theme that was introduced previously with John the Baptist. Samaritans were “half-breeds” that were the product of intermarriage and a “scattering” and “sowing” that occurred with the Assyrian captivity. A Samaritan woman who is ½ Jew and ½ Gentile is a fitting representation of the Bride of Christ – for He

has reconciled the two into one new body. The parallels of Jacob finding his wife with Jesus finding His are striking:

- 1) Jacob left his home country to find a bride. Jesus left heaven to find His Bride.
- 2) Jacob had a dream of a ladder and anointed a stone.
- 3) John the Baptist finds a stone (Jesus) and anoints Him – the very ladder Jacob dreamed of (Jn.1:51). Jacob found his bride at this well at “high day.” Jesus met with the Samaritan woman at the same well at the sixth hour or noon time.
- 4) Jacob had 12 sons that comprised the old-covenant bride of Israel. Jesus appoints 12 disciples representing the new-covenant and transformed Israel/Bride. This woman is marred and has had 6 men in her life finding no rest and contentment until finding Jesus -- the 7th. Shiloh/Jesus is the Sabbath rest who is beginning a “gathering” that will be completed at harvest time at His return in His contemporary generation (Gen.49:1, 10; Mt.24:30-31, 34; Hebs.3-4, 10:25, 37).

2) "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will." "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice "and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." (Jn. 5:21, 24-29)

It has been creedally assumed by Mathison¹ that Jesus taught two kinds of resurrections in John 5: 1) the first spiritual associated with the gospel in verses

¹ Dr. John Ed Mathison retired in June 2008, after 36 years as senior minister of Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. He served as associate minister at Capitol Heights Methodist Church in Montgomery 1964-1966, as minister at South Brookley Methodist Church in Mobile 1966-1970, and as minister at Trinity United Methodist Church in Phenix City 1970-1972.

25-27 because of Jesus' statement of "the hour (or time) is coming and *now is*" and 2) a literal bodily one at the end of time because of Jesus' statement "Marvel not at this: for the hour (or time) is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice..." (WSTTB?, pp.172-173). Mathison in n.20 on page 174 claims the same concept of a "spiritual already" and then a literal future "not yet" is taught by Jesus in (Jn.4:21-24) and thus the two should be considered parallel of which we agree! But we know the "not yet" of "the hour is coming" or "the time is coming" of John 4 is not referring to a 2000 + years away eschatological event, but when Jerusalem and the temple is destroyed in A.D. 70. In fact Mathison's co-author Kenneth Gentry sees Jesus' eschatological "not yet" "the hour is coming" as we do – to be referring to the judgment upon Jerusalem and the destruction of her temple in A.D. 70.

Therefore, Mathison's paralleling Jesus' statements in John 4 and John 5 combined with Gentry's A.D. 70 fulfilment of John 4 makes our case. Not just that, but since Gentry has recently taken the position that the resurrection of Daniel 12:2 was fulfilled in AD 70, it should be pointed out that clearly Jesus and John are following the "hour" of the (OG) LXX of Daniel 12:2:

Daniel 12:1: "And at that **hour**..."

John 5:28: "...for an **hour is coming**, in which all who are in the tombs will

In July 2008, Dr. Mathison and a board of directors established the John Ed Mathison Leadership Ministries, which will involve preaching, teaching, conferences and seminars. The purpose of the ministry is to train pastors and lay persons to be leaders impacting the world for Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God. The ministry website, www.johnedmathison.org gives a full description of this ministry. Under his leadership, Frazer grew from 400 members to more than 8,800 and had the largest Sunday School attendance for United Methodist churches in America. In 1986 the Church Leadership Institute sited Frazer as the fastest growing church of any denomination in Alabama. In 1999, the church was given the National Church of the Year Award from Neighbors Who Care, the victim assistance arm of Prison Fellowship, founded by Chuck Colson. Most recently, in 2006, The Church Reporter magazine recognized Frazer as the 25th most influential church in America. At Dr. Mathison's retirement Frazer had eight Sunday morning worship services at the Atlanta Highway campus—three traditional, three contemporary, one Hispanic and one Chinese. The worship services of Frazer were televised nationwide each week with INSP network, reaching about 40 million homes. The worship services were also cybercast live and carried on local radio and television. Dr. Mathison has been elected to serve at six General and Jurisdictional Conferences of the United Methodist Church. He currently is the Chairman of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy.

hear His voice,

Daniel 12:2: “Many of those who sleep in the width of the earth **will arise [anatesontai]**...some unto **eternal life** and others to **reproach...and to eternal shame.**”
John 5:29: “and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection [anatastin] of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection [anatastin] of judgment.”

Also related:

1 John 2:18: “Dear children **it is the last hour...**”

Revelation 14:7: “...the **hour of His judgment has come.**”

Jesus teaches us that He raises the dead just as He had seen His Father do (Jn.5:21). The Father had raised the dead in the old testament corporately, spiritually, and covenantally by bringing both houses of Israel back into her land under Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezk.37, Isa.26-27) which served as a type of the resurrection life Christ was bringing. Jesus is teaching two phases of one resurrection, not two different kinds of resurrections! In both passages marked “A” below, the already and not yet are taught:

A) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth (spiritual & “already”) my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life (spiritual & “already”), and shall not come into condemnation (spiritual “already” or “not yet”); but is passed from death unto life (spiritual & “already”). 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, (a phrase connecting the same subject matter to what follows) The hour is coming (in the not too distant “not yet” of the spiritual resurrection described above), and now is (spiritual & “already”), when the dead (spiritual) shall hear (spiritually) the voice (spiritually) of the Son of God: and they that hear (spiritually) shall live (spiritually).

Before picking back up the same subject matter of the spiritual resurrection, Jesus goes back to a theme in verses 21-22 of Him getting life from the Father and having the authority to not only give that life but render judgment upon unbelievers:

B) 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

A) 28 Marvel not at this (that the Son has the authority to give life and judge): for the hour is coming, (the spiritual not to distant “not yet”) in the which all that are in the graves (spiritually dead) shall hear (spiritually) his voice (spiritually), 29 And shall come forth (spiritually); they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life (spiritual “not yet”); and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection (spiritual) of damnation.

B) 30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. This is simple Hebrew parallelism:

A. (verses 24-25) Two phases of ONE resurrection with an “already” and “not yet” of those coming out of a spiritual death into a spiritual life/resurrection.

B. (verses 26-27) Jesus has the authority to give this spiritual life (as stated above) and render judgment because His authority comes from the Father.

A. (verses 28-29) “Marvel not at this” – that the Son has this authority & the Messianic harvest of Israel is under way. Jesus now is picking back up the same spiritual “already” and “not yet” resurrection in the previous verses. Here there is an emphasis on the judgment aspect.

B. (verses 30) Jesus’ judgment in this resurrection is once again just, because it comes from observing the Father and having a dependence on Him.

It is pure *eisegesis* to assume that the “hearing,” “everlasting life,” “shall not come into condemnation,” has “passed from death unto life” are all referring to a spiritual resurrection, *but then what follows is a literal resurrection at the end of time*. Likewise the “the dead” “hearing” “the voice” and “will live” are all spiritual in verse 25, as are the “all that are in the graves” whom shall “hear” his “voice.” The following context follows suite, “the dead” are equivalent to the same subjects as “all that are in the graves” (whom have done good or evil) with the “hearing,” “voice,” and “will live” being spiritual just as they were in the previous verses. This is very simple but for Mathison and his creedal colleagues, the text “causes difficulty” because they can’t quite figure out which events are spiritual and which ones are allegedly literal. The old testament background here to “the dead” and those in “the graves” would be (Ezk.37:12-13). Because of the wicked among Israel and their abuse of the godly remnant and the Sabbath, Israel went eastward into slavery and death into the land of

Babylon for 70 years. The land would receive its Sabbatical rest for 70 years and then God called Cyrus to be the deliverer who would set the captives free at the end of those years to return to their land. God would raise them up by calling Ezra and Nehemiah to call Israel to repentance and come back into the land and rebuild the City. The Jews during the time of Jesus were still abusing the Sabbath and the poor (Jn.5:1-19) and as the Father had the authority to judge and raise them from the “graves” of the Babylonian captivity/death in verse 21, so too did the Son have the authority to set those free whom had been enslaved to sin!

The 1 John 2:17-18 and Revelation 14 Connections

Towards the end of John’s “this generation” (Mt.24:34), He wrote that He and his audience knew it was the “last hour” (1Jn.2:17-18). In Gentry’s debate with futurists on the book of Revelation he accurately states, “Similar notes of the temporal proximity of divinely governed cries abound in the New Testament (see Matt. 26:64; Acts 2:16-20; Rom. 13:11-12; 16:20; 1Cor.7:26, 29-31; Col. 3:6; 1Thess.2:16; Heb. 10:25, 37; James 5:8-9; 1Pet.4:5, 7; **1John 2:17-18**).

How else could the New Testament express nearness more clearly?[4] Since Mathison takes John’s “last hour” and stretches 2000+ years post A.D.70, we shall let Mathison, Strimple, Kistemacker, and their co-authors answer Gentry’s question here. Most commentators agree that the analogy of Scripture parallels John’s teaching on the resurrection “the **hour** is coming” in (Jn.5), with “it is the **last hour**” in (1Jn.2:17-18), and with “for the **hour of his judgment** is come:” in (Rev.14:7). Mathison doesn’t even touch (Rev.14) in connection with the resurrection of (Jn.5) and the “last hour” of (1Jn.2), and in another work this is all he has to say of the *entire* chapter of (Rev.14), “Chapter 14 is a vision of the fall of Jerusalem, referred to here as “Babylon the great” (14:8). As we will see in chapters 17-18, the evidence that “Babylon” is a symbolic description of Jerusalem is compelling. At this point, we merely note that this “great city” has already been identified as Jerusalem in 11:8; where she is referred to as Sodom and Egypt. In chapter 14, she is also called Babylon.” (*Postmillennialism*, pp.152-153). And somehow we are the ones guilty of giving “shallow exegesis”?!?

What Mathison creedally and conveniently fails to cover here is that the time of Jerusalem’s/Babylon’s destruction is the time when one like the Son of Man comes on a cloud to reap the great harvest/resurrection of the earth/land and judgment is rendered for the wicked and the works of the righteous follow them into God’s presence (14:10-20). Mathison makes the parallel with Revelation 11 and 14 but *once again* fails to note that the time of the judgment of the city in chapter 11 is likewise the time of the judgment (thus the resurrection) “of the dead,” and thus access into God’s Most Holy Place presence is given

(Rev.11:18-19; cf. Heb.9:6-10). Study Bibles and commentaries alike see the connection between the harvesting/resurrection of the wicked and their blood extending “outside the City” for “a distance of 1,600 stadia” in verses 19-20 to be descriptive of being “outside Jerusalem” (Heb.13:12) and the distance of Israel’s Land within the localized Palestinian region extending from North to South or from Tyre to the border of Egypt. David Chilton correctly wrote, “...The whole Land of Israel is thus represented as overflowing with blood in the coming nationwide judgment. The streams of running blood become a great Red Sea, reaching up to the horses’ bridles in a recapitulation of the overthrow of Pharaoh’s horses and chariots (Ex. 14:23, 38; 15:19; cf. the extensive use of Exodus imagery in the following chapter).” And “The bloodshed covers the Land, yet it is outside the City. The historical fulfillment of this was, from one perspective, when “Galilee was all over filled with fire and blood,” as the troops of Vespasian and Titus overran the county. The whole Land, except for Jerusalem, was covered with death and devastation.”

Mathison instead of *cherry-picking* around Revelation needs to submit to the teaching of the prophecy and become a Biblical preterist like Chilton did. Obviously Mathison’s conscience is bothering him since he does not allow John to interpret John in the crucial texts on the resurrection. Nor will he even reference or recommend David Chilton as one of the greatest postmillennial partial or full preterists that has ever been in print because he had the courage and honesty that Mathison obviously lacks (*Postmillennialism*, pp.52-53, 273-275). The other eschatological themes involved here in regards to the resurrection and judgment of “the dead” in (Jn.5/Rev.14) and the 144,000 (Rev.7:4-17), is that this takes place in a time frame synonymous with this group coming out of the great tribulation and the destruction of the City and temple as (Dan.12:1-7) so clearly teaches. We have allowed Gentry to ask a question on imminence in (1Jn.2:17-18) to his co-authors, but I have some for him now in returning back to (Jn.4-5; 1Jn.2:17-18; Rev.7-14; Dan.12/Mt.24).

1) How does the eschatological “not yet” “hour is coming” in (Jn.4) apply to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and then the same phrase “the hour is coming” as used by Jesus in (Jn.5) gets projected 2000+ years away when in fact the resurrection would occur when Jerusalem and the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 Dan.12:1-7/Mt.24:15, 30-31/Lk.21:22?

2) How does John’s “not yet” resurrection “the hour is coming” in (Jn.4-5) not get fulfilled in his “it is the last hour” “clear nearness” A.D. 70 statement of (1Jn.2:17-18)?

Simon Kistemaker makes the following parallels between John's teaching on the resurrection in John 5 with that of Rev.20:

Fourth Gospel

Book of Revelation

A. First Resurrection

A. First Resurrection

I most solemnly assure you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me has everlasting life ... has passed out of death into life. I most solemnly assure you, the hour is coming — yea, has already arrived! — when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

“... and I saw *the souls* of them that had been beheaded ... and such as worshiped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and *they lived* and reigned with Christ a thousand years.... *This is the first resurrection.*”

... and (he) does not come into condemnation. (For the solemn introductory formula see on 1:51.)

“Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection: over these the second death has no power.”

B. Second Resurrection (unto judgment)

B. Second Resurrection (unto judgment)

Stop being surprised about this, for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out: those who have done good, for the resurrection of life, and those who have practiced evil, for the resurrection of condemnation.

“And I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it.... And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works: And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.... And if any was not found in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.”

We too make the parallels, but again we see two phases of ONE resurrection for “the dead” (both righteous and wicked) occurring at the end of the old-covenant age, not two kinds — one spiritual and one physical being taught by Jesus and

John. Possibly during Jesus' ministry the "already" of the resurrection harvest had begun, but with the Holy Spirit being poured out on Pentecost, the "already" and "inauguration" stage of the new creation and "firstfruits" (Rev.14:4-20) resurrection had most definitely begun. The "second" phase of the harvest/resurrection included the harvest "gathering" of these souls into the kingdom / new creation of God in a "end of this age," "this generation," "at hand," "soon," "some standing here," time frame (Mt.13:39-43; 24:30-31, 34 -- 25; Rev.1:1, 22:12/Mt.16:27-28). Since the resurrection includes the souls of those whom had died prior to A.D. 70, *the continuity of a spiritual resurrection of souls remains the same*. In farming one does not begin with the firstfruits of grain and then at harvest time bring in something completely different such as bananas. This was a resurrection of "souls" from the time of the firstfruits to the harvest!

3) *"I will raise him up on the last day"* (Jn.6:39-40, 44, 54)

Within the immediate context of (Jn.6:39) there is nothing but spiritual fulfillment. Jesus is the spiritual bread and water in verse 35 who gives spiritual life in verse 33. Immediately following verse 39, Jesus says, "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, *and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*" So once again we have the spiritual "already" of "everlasting life," and the "not yet" of John's audience being raised up at the "last day" or as previously described as "the hour is coming." Mathison denies the text even has an "already" aspect to it (*WSTTB?*, p.174) trying to distance the text from (Jn.4-5)'s *spiritual* water, harvest, and resurrection that were apart of the "already" of "the hour is coming." And yet he appears to miss the "already" of Jesus' teaching in (Jn.4) on picking back up the spiritual water and thirst theme in (Jn.6:35) and the "already" of "everlasting life." in verse 47. Either way there is nothing in the text that demands a casket resurrection of physical corpses coming out of the ground at the end of time. Thus far from John 1 – 6 all we have seen is how Jesus and His followers are the new creation and He sums up His teaching with the simple and straightforward words, **"the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life" (Jn.6:63).** God accomplished redemption for all of His elect in the "last day" of the old-covenant age, and has nothing to do with the last day of time. Reformed futurists have no problem seeing why God could perform a universal redemption for His elect within a first century time frame and in a local historical setting when it comes to the cross and resurrection of Christ. But when it comes to Him appearing a second time or coming on the clouds of glory, this somehow HAS to be an end of time literal and global event. The Bible teaches no such thing!

4) *“As the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from **within** him.” (Jn. 7:38)*

I addressed this passage in relation to the living water in (Jn.4), to the Temple of (Ezk.47) of which the Church is (2Cor.6:16/Ezk.37:27). John’s gospel continues to press the theme of Christ and the Kingdom being “in” (Jn.6:53-58) or “within” the person and not something that will transform their corpse someday at the end of time. The “inauguration” of these living waters is found at Pentecost when “Jews from **every nation under heaven**” came to Jerusalem and were receiving the “already” of everlasting life through faith, and then went back to these nations to fulfill the great commission at the end of the old-covenant age in A.D. 70 (Acts 2:5/Mark.13:10/Rms.16:25-26). The “not yet” of these living waters comes in an “at hand” and “shortly” time frame (Rev.21-22:7, 10, 12, 20) in which the spiritual water of everlasting life **continues** to heal the nations post A.D.70. According to Revelation there is no spiritual “inauguration” post A.D. 70 awaiting a physical stage of “resurrection” and “restoration of [literal] creation.” ***Such an invention comes from the necessity to defend a system of theology and is not derived from the texts.***

5) *“If you keep My words you will never see death” (Jn.8:51)*

The Jews were so blinded and self righteous that they wouldn’t even admit that within their history they had been enslaved to the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and now the Romans verse 33. But Christ had come to set them free from what Egypt, Babylon, and the gentile powers represented – slavery to sin and spiritual death (verses 31-36; Mt.8:22). Jesus’ statement that anyone believing in him “would never see death,” was taken literally and physically by His carnally minded audience in verse 52. This is the same theological error that the literal rapturists (futurists or “preterist”) and literal resurrectionists make in interpreting Jesus’ and Paul’s words of the living at the return of Christ in (Mt.24:30-31, 34; 1Cor.15; & 1Thess.4). Being alive biologically and then whisked away in the literal clouds at Christ’s appearing has nothing to do with Jesus’ teaching on “will never see death.” Physical death and physical life is not the emphasis of John’s writings or Jesus’ teaching.

6) *The greener pastures of the new covenant & the security of “eternal life”* The “thief” or false shepherds that sought to steal, kill, and destroy were the Pharisees of the previous chapter seeking to destroy the joy of the blind man that had received his sight. They sought to put out of the synagogue and persecute any that listened to or put their faith in Jesus. Jesus’ authoritative “Verily I say unto you” is linking the two chapters together and continues the same theme and subject matter. Jesus is now emphasizing and expounding the living parable of

what has just taken place. There is no need to worry about being persecuted or put out of the synagogues by the old-covenant corrupted “shepherds” of the Pharisees, because Jesus was the true new covenant Davidic shepherd/King who was spiritually in the process of “gathering” (Greek *episunago*) and building up His new covenant temple/synagogue which would be completed at His return (cf. Mt.23:13-14, 37; Mt.24:30-31; Heb.10:25, 37). Jesus and through Paul, would be gathering Israel and the gentiles to Himself and making them one new man/flock/tabernacle to rest in and “causing” them to graze in the very Garden of Eden (Ephs.2; Ezk.34; Ezk.36:24-38; Ezk.37:21-28).

Christ laid His life down for the “sheep” (not the goats of whom He never knew) who believed in Him because the Father had given them to the Son and sovereignly drew them to Him. Those Arminian preterists such as Don Preston (Preterist) and Tim Martin who think a corporate election and resurrection somehow substantiates Arminianism are sorely mistaken. The corporate body is made of individuals or sheep Jesus and the Father “know by name.” When pressed hard on every side through difficult outward and inward trials, they remain in the new-covenant sheepfold for they know they have nowhere else to go. Nor do they have a *desire* to leave because God has “caused” them to be safe and keeps them obeying His new-covenant laws that He has written on their hearts (Jer.31-32; Ezk.36:27; Jn.6:68-69; 1Jn.3:9; Rev.3:12). I couldn’t agree more with Arminian Preterist, Don Preston when he writes, “IF YOUR THEOLOGY SAYS THAT GOD FAILED, YOU NEED TO CHANGE YOUR THEOLOGY!” God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit **could not, nor did fail** to raise up the individual members (known by name through faith) of His new-covenant Body pre-A.D. 70 or post! To teach otherwise is to trust in a god who fails and “altars” (Ps.89) His kingdom plans either in the old or new-covenant ages - selah.

7) *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"* (Jn. 11:25-26) Oddly there is no discussion of (Jn.11:25-26) in Mathison’s chapter and it is rarely discussed throughout the book. As a Calvinist I know the resurrection of Lazarus in (Jn.11:43-44) is usually used among reformed pastors and theologians to illustrate God’s effectual, irresistible, and creative call to support a spiritual resurrection involved in hearing the gospel and the giving of faith by God to the believer in (Ephs.2:1-10). And yet somehow Jesus’ words in verses 25-26 are supposed to teach a universal casket resurrection at the end of time. It is true that Jesus is using Lazarus’ death and resurrection to teach a deeper truth to Martha and the rest of His disciples.

Jesus deliberately waited 4 days to reach Lazarus because He intended to test the faith of Martha and his disciples. As usual He would perform a physical miracle in order to teach a deeper spiritual lesson, and this time the lesson was on death and life. In verse 23 Jesus assures Martha that He intends to raise Lazarus. In verse 24 Martha in disbelief *puts off the miracle* of a resurrection for Lazarus “in the resurrection” and in “the last day.” Now Jesus has Martha and the others right where He wants them in order to teach them something deeper about Himself and the true power of what the resurrection is all about. Jesus responds, “I am the resurrection, and the life:...” The first exegetical and hermeneutical question we should ask ourselves is, “how has Jesus used His “I am” statements previously and throughout this gospel?” Are they used to teach biological and literal truths or spiritual of what eternal or resurrection life is all about?

a) “I am the bread of Life” (Jn.6:35, 48, 51) – spiritual / “eternal life”

b) “I am from Him” (Jn.7:28-29) – Jesus came to reveal who the Father is and was one with Him. Jesus was from heaven from the beginning. Jesus is from God and God is “Spirit.” Jesus was currently “in heaven” while on earth (Jn.3:13), and is further described by Paul as the “man from heaven” and “a life-giving spirit.” So yes the words Jesus spoke before and after His resurrection were that “the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life” (Jn.6:63).

c) “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of l

ife.” (Jn.8:12) – spiritual / resurrection “life”

d) “I am from above.” “I am not of this world” (Jn.8:23) – spiritual

e) “I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.” (Jn.9:39) – spiritual / sight and blindness.

f) “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (Jn.10:9) – spiritual / spiritual entrance & grazing
g) “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. (Jn.10:10) – spiritual / give abundant spiritual eternal life

g) “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.” (Jn.12:26) – Jesus was “in heaven” while on earth and so His followers could experience this heavenly eternal life and be raised and rule with Him while on earth as well

(Ephs.2:1-6; Rev.20) – spiritual / servants being honoured in heaven while on earth.

h) “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.” (Jn.14:3) – Spiritual / Here the “not yet” of being with Christ in heaven is emphasized but does not take away from the spiritual “already” of (Ephs.2:1-6; Rev.20). Spiritual / “we will come to him and make our home with him” (vs.23)

i) “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (Jn.14:6). Spiritual / “the way” we come to Jesus is through faith, “the truth” “set’s us free” from the spiritual slavery of sin, we receive spiritual and abundant “life” through faith.

j) “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” (Jn.14:20). Spiritual / The indwelling of the Spirit and the Father and the Son “with” or “in you” see (vs.23).

k) “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” (Jn.15:1, 5) Spiritual / a bearing forth spiritual fruit.

l) “And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me that they may be one, as we *are*.” (Jn.17:10-11) – Spiritual / Christ is glorified “in” His people as they keep His commandments and love one another.

m) “...sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” (Jn.18:37). Spiritual / a spiritual “hearing” of God’s voice through faith, and “My Kingdom is not of this world” (vs.36).

NONE of the “I am” statements throughout John’s gospel can exegetically be understood to be referring to literal or biological realities at the end of time whereby the “flesh” “prophiteths,” but rather these are words of “spirit” and “life” and have God dwelling “with” or “in” His people while on earth or with Him after death at His return.

Jesus goes on to say, “he that believeth (spiritual) in me, though he were dead (physically like Lazarus), yet shall he live (spiritually): And whosoever liveth (physically) and believeth (spiritually live) in me shall never die (spiritually).

Believest thou this?" The passage is addressing two groups of people: 1) Those who had "fallen asleep" or died prior to the in-breaking of new-covenant life (such as David or Daniel) or even prior to the consummation of it in A.D. 70 (such as Lazarus at this point). 2) The second group are those who hear the words of Jesus and begin experiencing resurrection or eternal life.

Other than the Olivet Discourse being the source from where Paul got his eschatology on the coming of the Lord (1Thess.4:15), perhaps the order of the dead being raised first and then a change or catching away of the living can also be seen here in (Jn.11:25-26). If so, then we need to pay closer attention to what Jesus says of those who hear His words, for they "will NEVER die." Jesus has already used this expression in John and it never means that those who believe in Him will never [physically] die. Obviously those that were present and believed on Jesus prior to His return in A.D. 70 did die physically and believers post Parousia continue to die biologically. If this text is considered a parallel passage to the order of (1Thess.4:15-17), then the "catching away" or "never dyeing" has nothing to do with a literal rapture or literal transformation of bodies at Christ's return. Those who were dead would be raised out of Hades into God's presence. Those who were alive would also experience God's presence and "never die" – that is - be separated from Him having to continue to anticipate the forgiveness of sin. There is nothing in this text that supports a "fleshly" or biological resurrection at the end of time. That has to be exegetically presupposed or read into the text.

The reason Jesus raises Lazarus from biological death, isn't because He is saying, "see this is how the general resurrection body" is going to look like at the end of time," but rather, is Him being consistent with the purpose of His miracles throughout John – it is a physical miracle used to emphasize a spiritual truth about eternal or resurrection life in the here and now. At this point Jesus was interested in cultivating and strengthening the hearts and beliefs of Martha and His disciples about the joy of them "never dying" (spiritually) and abiding in His teachings *in the then present -- here and now*.

8) *"In my Father's house are many mansions (Grk. mone): if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* *"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode (Grk. mone) with him."* (Jn.14:2-3, 23)

In the New Testament, the Greek word *mone* "abiding" or "dwelling" is only used here in these two verses. The later in verse 23 explains how Jesus would

“receive” His people -- when He and the Father (Who are the temple Rev.21:22) *came to* make their “dwelling” or abode/home *with them*. The “Father’s house” or Temple, consists not just of the Father and the Son, but now their new-covenant heavenly people (Heb.3:6, Heb.8-10). How was Jesus preparing a dwelling place for His people? In context, He was going to give them the Holy Spirit Who would be apart of the process of forming and transforming Christ in them (1Cor.6:19; Gals.4:19; 2Cor.3-4; Phip.2:5/Rms.12:1-2) until the “light” or “Day Star” (Christ) rose in their hearts completely (2Pet.1:19; cf.1Jn.2:8). They were in the process of “being built up” as the Temple (1Pet.2:5) of God and “putting on” the “new man” which is another metaphor for putting on the wedding garments of Christ’s righteousness which would become their own (Ephs.4:24; Isa.52:1/Rev.21:2; Mt.22:11; Rev.16:15; 19:18/ 1Cor.1:30/ 2Cor.5:21). This was taking place until they were fully “adorned” as the Most Holy Place or City of the Living God. This City was likewise in the process of **coming** down from heaven (Rev.3:12NIV) and would fully come in an “at hand” time frame to bring healing to the nations. At that point in A.D. 70 God’s people were found to be “glorified” “in” Him and He “in” them (2Thess.1:12; Romans.8:8-11, 18; Jn.14:20).

There are six references to the second coming in this chapter:

- 1) “receive you to myself” in verse 3.
- 2) “Manifest Myself to him” in verse 2.
- 3) “We will come to him and make Our home with him” in verse 23.
- 4) “I am going away and *coming back to you*” in verse 28.
- 5) “At that day (“the last day” or the day He comes to “receive” and “manifest Himself to them”) you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you” in verse 29.
- 6) “And when it (His return) does come to pass, *you may believe.*”

What is interesting are the last two references to His return #5 and #6. If it were a physical and literal “rapture” or “resurrection” “catching away,” then why the words “then you will know that I am in My father, and you in Me, and I in you” and “that you may believe”? Obviously if one was whisked away in the literal clouds and your body had been literally transformed, you would “know” and there would be no doubt about it that Christ had returned. Jesus’ words indicate that His return and Kingdom was something that could be missed and not seen with the physical eye (Lk.17:20-21, 21-37). This is consistent with what Jesus

taught in (Mark.8:38-9:1) as well. In other words the Christians remained on the earth in A.D. 70 and Christ and the Father made their “dwellings” “with” “in” and thus “within” them (Jn.14:2-3, 23; Col.1:27; 1Pet.1:19; Lk.17:20-21)!

Jesus’ classic statement of the “peace” He gives that the old-covenant world could not give in verse 27 (within the context of the temple motif) is not arbitrarily placed. “Peace” would characterize the new-covenant temple/people (Hag.2:19). The disciples’ depression experienced briefly after the crucifixion would be turned into joy, peace, and courage as Jesus and the Holy Spirit brought back to their remembrance the teachings of the old-testament Scriptures. “True peace” came through the redemptive work in His sacrifice and second appearing apart from sin, which alone could cleanse their consciences and hearts from dead works. The old-covenant temple/world could not do this (Heb.8-10).

The inspiration of the New Testament writers concerning “things to come” is clearly laid out for us in (Jn.14:26; 16:13). Mathison would rather compromise his beliefs of the time texts with Kistemaker² and Strimple³ as an alleged “possibility” than apply them consistently to the judgment and resurrection and be considered a “hyper-preterist.” This is simply NOT an exegetical option. The same writer that said he would be led into all truth concerning “**things** to come” said the time of these eschatological “**things**” would be fulfilled “shortly” (Rev.1:1---Rev.22:7, 10, 12, 20). There is nothing ANYWHERE in

2 Dr. Simon Kistemaker joined RTS in 1971 and now serves the Orlando campus as Professor of New Testament Emeritus where he continues to teach occasional elective courses. A native of The Netherlands, Dr. Kistemaker holds a doctorate from the Free University of Amsterdam. In 2001, Dr. Kistemaker finished his seventh volume in the *New Testament Commentary* series, which completed the major project initiated by Dr. William Hendricksen. Four of the seven volumes written by Dr. Kistemaker received the Gold Medallion Evangelical Book of the Year Award from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Dr. Kistemaker has also written several books focused on the life and ministry of Jesus as well as numerous scholarly articles and contributions to various reference volumes.

3 Nick Strimple is a composer, conductor, scholar and author whose interests include twentieth century music, Jewish music, the music of Dvořák and other Czech composers, the aesthetics of sacred music and virtually all aspects of choral music. He is the author of two critically acclaimed books, *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century* (2002) and *Choral Music in the Nineteenth Century* (2008). He also serves as director of music at Beverly Hills Presbyterian Church and music director of the Choral Society of Southern California and the Los Angeles Zimriyah Chorale.

the writings of John that indicate the second coming, the judgment, and the resurrection are somehow excluded from the “things” of the prophecy!

9) *The harvesting/resurrection of producing fruit and judgment of Israel's Vine* (Jn. 15). The background to Jesus' teaching on the Vine and He and His followers being the “true vine,” lies in the Old Testament. Above the entrance into the Most Holy Place of the temple was a golden vine. The “vine of the earth/land” (Rev.14:17-18) in the Old Testament and new is clearly Israel and “true” Israel – Christ and the Church transformed through its harvest/resurrection process. Ogden correctly states, “What is the vine of the earth? Think! There is only one vine of the earth of significance in the Scriptures. We follow the lineage of Christ through it (Matt.1:1-17; Lk. 3:23-38). The vine of the earth is the nation of Israel, God's choice vine (cf. Psa. 80:8-19; Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 2:20-21; Ezk.17:1-10). “Her grapes are fully ripe”, i.e., her iniquity is complete. It is time to gather her grapes for the harvest (Dan.8:23; 9:24; Joel 3:13; 1Thess. 2:16).”

Jesus' parable of the landowner and the Vineyard in (Mt.21:33-46) with its “when the *harvest time approached*” in verse 34's A.D. 70 time frame, needs to be read along side of what we have seen here in John's writings on the time frame of the harvest. It also needs to be read alongside the judgment and burning of these branches in (Jn.15)! Mathison agrees that the judgment of the (Mt.21) parable of the Vineyard occurred in A.D. 70 (*WSTTB?*, p.176, *Postmillennialism*, p.221). Therefore its “harvest” occurred then as well! Jesus only taught one harvest and it is inseparably tied to the resurrection. What we have seen over and over again, is that when the kingdom comes (Mt.21:43), is when the second coming / harvest / gathering / and resurrection occurs.

To our Arminian opponents both futurist and preterist, I should point out that in John's writings and theology it was the mere professors of faith among the Church that were not truly abiding (thus unable to bear fruit) in Christ whom were cast out into the fire in A.D. 70. True Christians “continue” “abide” “bear fruit” and “cannot” nor “will” they “sin” the sin of final apostasy—the “sin unto death” (1Jn.2:19/1Jn.3:9/1Jn.5:4-18; Jn.15).

The writer to the Hebrews makes the new exodus parallels and echos in (Heb.3-6) with those whom have “tasted” the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come to echo the 10 spies that had tasted the fruit/grapes of the inheritance/promised land in (Num.13). Of the 12 only Joshua and Caleb possessed saving faith! Don Preston's appeals that (Heb.6:4) teaches that this group were Christians that had been “regenerated” instead of being “instructed” or “enlightened” and then allegedly lost their salvation is bogus and I believe

irresponsible. Does he likewise believe those other 10 spies and the unbelievers that fell in the wilderness wandering all possessed saving faith but lost it?!? Tim Martin's appeals of once being an educated "Calvinist" and now an Arminian based upon an alleged definitive teaching of Jesus in (Jn.15) is about as impressive to me as Clark Pinnock's⁴ history, road to apostasy, and Arminian "apologetics." The notion that John 15 and Hebrews 6 teaches a Christian can lose his salvation has about as much exegetical credibility to it as Ed Steven's⁵ or Tim LaHaye's⁶ appeals to (Jn.14) as teaching a definitive literal rapture.

10) *"If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"* (John 21:18-23)

4 Clark H. Pinnock's life journey is over. The influential and often controversial evangelical theologian died unexpectedly August 15 of a heart attack. He was 73. In March, the long-time professor of systematic theology at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, had announced he was withdrawing from public life and revealed that he was battling Alzheimer's disease. It was a difficult admission for a man whose mercurial mind and openness to the Holy Spirit led him to stake out theological positions that challenged evangelical orthodoxies. Renowned for exploring the frontiers of biblical truth, he was reputed to study carefully, think precisely, argue forcefully, and shift his positions willingly if he discovered a more fruitful pathway of understanding. He said he preferred to be known, "not as one who has the courage of his convictions, but one who has the courage to question them and to change old opinions which need changing."

Born in Toronto in 1937, Pinnock's mind was changing from his youth: His parents were liberal Baptists, but at age 12 converted to the more conservative evangelical faith of his grandmother and Sunday school teacher. After years of involvement in Youth for Christ, the Canadian Keswick Bible Conference, and Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, Pinnock graduated from the University of Toronto. He went on to study under F. F. Bruce at Manchester University, where he earned his Ph.D.

5 Preached nine years in *Church of Christ* congregations in TX, NY, OH and PA. Director and instructor for two years at *North East Ohio Bible Institute* (Christian leadership school). Pastor of the Reformed Christian Fellowship church in Groveland NY for two years. Spoke at preterist seminars in TX, PA, TN, FL, NJ, NY, NE, CA, NM, OH, MI, NC, IL, CT, and KS. Co-hosted a preterist radio talk show. Interviewed on other Christian radio programs numerous times. Defended preterism in two public oral debates. Three scholarly paper presentations at the regional and national meetings of the *Evangelical Theological Society*.

6 Timothy F. "Tim" LaHaye (born April 27, 1926) is an American evangelical Christian minister, author, and speaker. He is best known for the *Left Behind* series of apocalyptic fiction, which he co-wrote with Jerry B. Jenkins. He has written over 50 books, both fiction and non-fiction.

After Peter learns from Jesus that he is going to be martyred, in essence he asks Jesus if John is likewise going to be one of those martyred before He comes or if he will be one that lives to experience His return (Jn.21:20). This conversation makes no sense unless the disciples had been taught from John the Baptist and Jesus Himself that He in fact would return in some of their lifetimes (Mt.3:2-12; 10:22-23; 16:27-28; 21-25).



Because the Gospel of John differs so much from the synoptic gospels (*Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*), some conservative scholars once thought that the purpose of the Gospel was to correct errors that John found in the other gospels. However, most modern scholars recognise that the gospels were not written by eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus. There is clear evidence that John's Gospel was based on Luke's Gospel, which in turn was substantially sourced from Mark's Gospel. Whatever the reason for John's Gospel, it was not that the author wanted to correct errors in the other gospels. Elaine Pagels points out two interesting objectives in John's Gospel. The Gospel compares Peter unfavourably with 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', and it may have been intended to counteract a developing tendency to worship or venerate Peter to excess. Pagels also identifies a thread of anti-Thomas narrative in John's Gospel, resulting in the famous "doubting Thomas" tradition. Pagels believes that the author of *John* was attempting to counteract the influence of Thomas' Gospel. *The Cambridge Ancient History: XI The Imperial Peace A.D. 70-192* says, "The Gospel of John is not intended to be read as a biography, it is a mystical and theological interpretation of the life and teachings of Christ." Many scholars are now convinced that the Gospel of John emerged from an intense debate over who Jesus was, with its purpose to defend certain views and oppose others.



The Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem

Commentary on the Gospel of John

by

Arno C. Gaebelain (Public domain)

Introduction

The fourth Gospel has always been ascribed to the beloved disciple, the Apostle John. He was one of the sons of Zebedee. His mother Salome was especially devoted to the Lord. (See Luke 8:3; Luke 23:55 and Mark 16:1.) He knew Him from the beginning of His ministry and had followed Him with much love and faithfulness, and seems to have been the most beloved of the Lord. He never mentions himself in the Gospel by name, but nevertheless speaks of himself, as the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23; John 19:26; John 20:2; John 21:7; John 21:20; John 21:24). With James and Peter he was singled out to witness the transfiguration and to go with the Lord to the garden of Gethsemane. The three also were present when the Lord raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead

(Mark 5:37). John was likewise an eye-witness of the sufferings of Christ (John 19:26; John 19:35).

The Johannine Authorship.

The Johannine Authorship of the fourth Gospel is proven by the testimony of the so-called church-fathers. Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, Eusebius, and above all, Irenaeus, all speak of this Gospel as the work of the Apostle John. Other ancient authorities might be added. Of great value is the testimony of the two most pronounced enemies of Christianity, Porphyry and Julian. Both speak of the Gospel of John and neither one doubted that the Apostle John wrote this last Gospel. Had there been any evidence against the Johannine authorship we may rest assured that these two prominent adversaries would have made good use of it to reject the authenticity of the Gospel which emphasizes the absolute Deity of Christ.

The most interesting and conclusive evidence for the Johannine authorship is furnished by Irenaeus and Polycarp. Polycarp had known the Apostle John personally and Irenaeus knew Polycarp. In a letter to his friend Florinus, Irenaeus wrote as follows:--

“I can describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching, Polycarp as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures.”

Now Irenaeus who had known Polycarp the friend and companion of the Apostle John, speaks of the Gospel of John as the work of the Apostle John; he treats the entire fourth Gospel as a well-known and long used book in the church. He does not mention what authority he had for doing this. There was no need for it in his day, for everybody knew that this Gospel had been written by John. “When Irenaeus who had conversed with Polycarp, the friend of the Apostle John, quotes this Gospel as the work of the Apostle, we may fairly presume that he had assured himself of this by the testimony of one so well capable of informing him” (Dean Alford, Greek N.T.) This strongest evidence for the Johannine authorship has been ably stated by R. W. Dale of Birmingham in the following words: “Irenaeus had heard Polycarp describe his intercourse with John and the rest who had seen the Lord; this must have been long after

John's death, perhaps as late as A.D. 145, or even A.D. 150, for Irenaeus lived into the third century. Was the Fourth Gospel published before that time? Then Polycarp must have spoken of it; if John had not written it, Polycarp would have denied that it was genuine; and Irenaeus, who revered Polycarp, would never have received it. But if it was not published before that time, if it was unknown to John's friend and disciple forty or fifty years after John's death, then, again, it is incredible that Irenaeus should have received it.

“Polycarp's martyrdom was in the year A.D. 155 or A.D. 156. He had known John; and for more than fifty years after the death of John he was one of the trustees and guardians of John's memory. During a great part of that time he was the most conspicuous personage among the Churches of Asia Minor. Nor did he stand alone. He lived to such an advanced age, that he probably survived all the men who had listened with him to John's teaching; but for thirty or forty years after John's death there must have been a large number of other persons who would have associated themselves with him in rejecting a Gospel which falsely claimed John's authority. While these persons lived, such a Gospel would have had no chance of reception; and for thirty years after their death, their personal friends, who had heard them speak of their intercourse with John, would have raised a great controversy if they had been asked to receive as John's a Gospel of which the men who had listened to John himself had never heard, and which contained a different account of our Lord from that which John had given. But within thirty years after the martyrdom of Polycarp our fourth Gospel was universally regarded by the church as having a place among the Christian Scriptures, and as the work of the Apostle John. The conclusion seems irresistible; John must have written it.”

The Defeat of the Critics.

The Johannine authorship of this Gospel was first doubted by an English clergyman by name of Evanson, who wrote on it in 1792. In 1820 Prof. Bretschneider followed in the history of the attack upon the authorship of this Gospel. Then came the Tubingen school, Strauss and Baur. Baur, the head of the Tubingen school gave the year 170 as the date when the Gospel of John was written; others put the date at 140; Keim, another critic, at 130; Renan between 117 and 138 A.D. But some of these rationalists were forced to modify their views. The Tubingen school was completely defeated and is now the dead thing of the past. We could fill many pages with the views and opinions of these critics and the answers, which able scholars who maintain the orthodox view, have given to them. This, we are sure, is not needed for true believers. The ripest and the best scholarship declares now that the fourth Gospel was written by

John. Well said Neander, “this Gospel, if it be not the work of the Apostle John, is an insoluble enigma.”

While the correct year in which the Gospel of John was written cannot be given, it seems quite evident that it was about the year 90 A.D.

The Purpose of the Gospel of John.

Modern critics of this Gospel have opposed the genuineness of it on the ground of the radical diversity between the views of the Person of Christ and His teachings as presented in the Gospel of John and the Synoptics. Such a diversity certainly exists, but it is far from being an evidence against the genuineness of this Gospel. It is an argument for it.

The synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, were already in existence for several decades and their contents known throughout the church. If an uninspired writer, some other one than John the Apostle, had undertaken to write another Gospel, such a writer would, in some way at least, have followed the story, which the Synoptics so closely follow. But the Gospel of John is, as already stated, radically different from the three preceding Gospels, and yet no critic can deny that the Gospel of John reveals the same wonderful Person who is the theme of the other Gospel records. As we have seen Matthew wrote the Jewish Gospel describing our Lord as the King; Mark makes Him known as the true Servant, and Luke pictures the Lord as the perfect Man. Thus the Synoptics emphasize His true humanity and show Him forth as the minister of the circumcision. The first two Gospels at least belong as much to the Old Testament as they belong to the New. True Christianity is not fully revealed in these Gospels. They move on Jewish ground. And what had taken place when finally the Holy Spirit moved the Apostle John to write his Gospel? The nation had completely rejected their Lord and King. The doom predicted by the Lord Jesus had fallen upon Jerusalem. The Roman army had burned the city and the temple. The Gentiles had come into the vineyard and the nation's dispersion among all the nations had begun. The facts are fully recognized by the Spirit of God in John's Gospel. This we find on the very threshold of this Gospel. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11). That Judaism was now a thing of the past is learned from the peculiar way in which the Passover-feast is mentioned. “And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh” (John 6:4; also John 2:13; John 11:55). The Sabbath and the Feast of Tabernacles are spoken of in the same way (John 5:1; John 7:2). Such statements, that the divinely given feasts were but “feasts of the Jews,” are not found in the Synoptics. In John's Gospel these statements show that we are outside of Judaism. Hebrew names and titles are translated also and the Gentile

meaning is given. (Messiah, which is interpreted Christ. John 1:1-51 :n . Rabbi, which is to say, being interpreted, Master. John 1:38. The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. John 19:17, etc.) This is another evidence that Judaism is no longer in view.

But something else had happened since the three first Gospels had been written. The enemy had come in perverting the truth. Wicked apostates and anti-Christian teachers asserted themselves. They denied the Person of the Lord, His essential Deity, the virgin birth, His finished work, His physical resurrection, in one word, “the doctrine of Christ.” A flood of error swept over the church. (The Epistles of John, besides the early Christian literature, bear witness to this fact. See 1 John 2:18-23; 1 John 4:1-6. Men were scattering the anti-Christian doctrines everywhere so that the Spirit of God demanded the severest separation from such. “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not in your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 1:10-11). An exhortation which is in force for all times.)

“Gnosticism” was corrupting the professing church everywhere. This system spoke of the Lord Jesus as occupying the highest rank in the order of spirits; they also denied the redemption by His blood and the gift of God to believing sinners, that is, eternal life. God in His infinite wisdom held back the pen of the Apostle John till these denials had matured and then he wrote under divine guidance the final Gospel in which the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-Begotten, the Second Person of the Godhead, is made known in the fullness of His Glory. Linked with this marvelous picture of Him, Who is the true God and the Eternal Life, is the other great truth made known in the fourth Gospel. Man is dead, destitute of life; he must be born again and receive life. And this eternal life is given by the Son of God to all who believe on Him. It is communicated as a present and abiding possession, dependent on Him, Who is the source and the Life as well. At the same time the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, is revealed in this Gospel as He is not revealed in the Synoptics. The Gospel which reveals the Eternal Life is necessarily the Gospel in which the Holy Spirit as the Communicator, Sustainer and Perfecter is fully made known. The Gospel of John is therefore the New Testament Gospel, the good news that Grace and Truth have come by Jesus Christ. It makes known what is more fully revealed in the doctrinal Epistles.

The last chapter in which we hear the Lord Jesus Christ speak, before His passion, is the seventeenth chapter. He speaks to the Father in the great prayer rightly called “the high-priestly prayer.” In it He touches upon all the great truths concerning Himself and His own made known in this Gospel, and we

shall also find that all the great redemption truths given in their fullness by the Holy Spirit in the Epistles, are clearly revealed in this prayer.

John's Own Testimony.

At the close of the twentieth chapter of this Gospel we find John's own testimony concerning the purpose of this Gospel. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through (in) His Name." Thus the twofold purpose of the fourth Gospel is given by the Apostle:--Christ the Son of God and the Life He gives to all who believe.

The characteristic features of this Gospel are too numerous to mention in this introductory word. We shall point them out in the annotations.

The Division of the Gospel of John

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). This verse may be given as the key-text of this Gospel, while the prominent words are: Life; Believe; Verily.

Different divisions of this Gospel have been suggested. In its structure it has been compared to the three divisions of the temple. The outer court (Chapter 1-12); the Holy Part (13-16); the Holiest (17-21). Others have used John 16:28 to divide the Gospel; "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father." This is unquestionably the order of events in the Gospel of John. He came forth from the Father (John 1:1-18); He came into the world (John 1:19-12); He left the world and has returned to the Father (13-21). Keeping the great purpose of this Gospel in view we make a three-fold division.

I. The Only-begotten, the Eternal Word; His Glory and His Manifestation. Chapter 1:1-2:22.

II. Eternal Life Imparted; what it is and what it Includes. Chapter 2:23-17.

III. "I lay down My life, that I might take it again Chapter 18-21.

First then we behold Him, the Only Begotten, the Creator of all things, the Life and the Light of men, in His full glory. The Eternal Word was made flesh and manifested Himself among men. This is followed by the main section of the

Gospel. It begins with the story of Nicodemus in which the absolute necessity of the new birth, the reception of eternal life by faith in the Son of God, is emphasized; it ends with the great summing up of all He taught concerning eternal life and salvation, in the great prayer of Chapter 17. Chapters 3-17 contain the progressive revelation concerning eternal life. The Reception and assurance of it, the Holy Spirit as the Communicator, the provisions for that life, the fruits of it, the goal of it, etc., we can trace in these chapters. In the third part we find the description of how He laid down His life and took it again in resurrection.



Archaeological light: The Dead Sea Scrolls

(Continued see page 84)

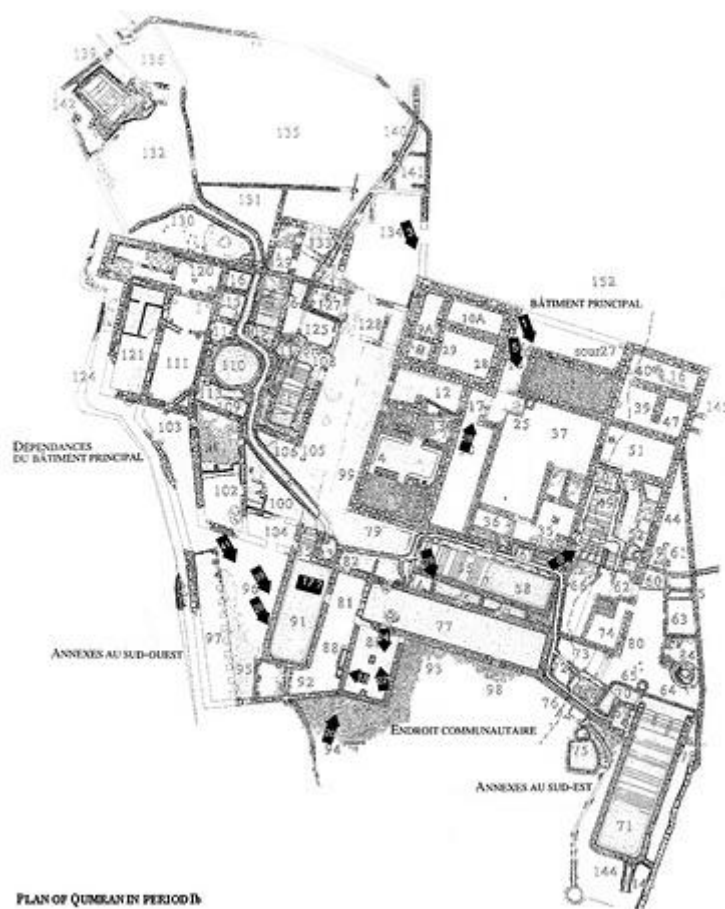
The Dead Sea Scrolls comprise 972 texts, which include what is now known as the Hebrew Bible, found in the Qumran valley on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea between 1946 and 1956. Of these, 220 comprise the earliest known surviving Biblical documents. Written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, mostly on parchment, and of great religious and historical significance, the manuscripts generally date between 150 BC and 70 AD.

The Scrolls are traditionally divided into three groups: “Biblical” manuscripts (copies of texts from the Hebrew Bible), “Apocrypha” (manuscripts that were

not ultimately canonized in the Bible) and “Sectarian” manuscripts (previously unknown documents on the rules and beliefs of a particular group or groups within Judaism).

Philip R. Davies (b.1945) is a biblical scholar of Early Judaism, History of Ancient Israel and the **Dead Sea Scrolls**. He also has an interest in the development of secular scholarship and contemporary cultural issues. He has a degree from Oxford (1967) and a doctorate from St Andrews (1972) where his doctoral thesis was on the War Scroll. He has been at the University of Sheffield – where he is now Research Professor of Biblical Studies – since 1974.

A provocative writer on biblical subjects, he has often questioned fundamental assumptions about various issues. His book *In Search Of “Ancient Israel”* poses the idea that the ancient notion of Israel referred to at least three separate entities, thus putting into question the notion of the “united kingdom” and the structure of the biblical narrative. Many of his suggestions in this book have subsequently come to be accepted as standard.



This is in reference to 'New Photographs of the Qumran Excavations from 1954 and Interpretations of L.77 and L.86' Wagemakers, Bart; Taylor, Joan E. Palestine Exploration Quarterly (ISSN: 0031-0328); Volume 143, No. 2, pp. 134-156(23); July 2011 Maney Publishing.

In 1947, the first cave containing manuscripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls was found by Bedouin shepherds, north of an ancient ruin known as Khirbet Qumran near the Dead Sea. Originally known as the 'Ain Feshkha Cave', the manuscripts and other artefacts in Qumran Cave 1 (1Q) illuminated both the history of the Biblical text and the variety of thought in early Judaism, and caused an international sensation. The nearby site of Qumran itself was excavated over five seasons from 1951, under the directorship of Father Roland de Vaux, of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem. De Vaux concluded that this remote and unusual site was occupied by a little-known 'sect' of Judaism mentioned by Josephus, Philo, Pliny and Dio Chrysostom: the Essenes. It was suggested that they hid the Dead Sea Scrolls ahead of the Roman army's arrival in 68 CE.

While de Vaux published a number of important preliminary reports, he summarised the excavations synthetically only in his Schweich Lectures, for the British Academy, in 1959. After his death in 1971, de Vaux's field notes and materials on Qumran remained unknown until Jean-Baptiste Humbert and Alain Chambon published these in 1994 with a dossier of important plans and photographs from the excavation. This publication was followed by a scientific volume. Nevertheless, there are points in de Vaux's field notes where readings are doubtful, and, in addition, there are many aspects of the site that remained unclear during the course of excavations and areas undocumented by photographs.

This has led to various disputes among archaeologists, particularly in regard to the site's chronology, with its occupation beginning in the Iron Age, continuing with a new settlement after a hiatus of some 500 years. De Vaux believed the second settlement here began in the late 2nd century BCE and ended around 70 CE. The precise date for the beginning and end of this second period of settlement, and the internal divisions of its different phases, remains disputed, though many scholars now see the beginning of this occupation (start of Period Ia, so Magness) as being in the early 1st century BCE and the end in the final decade of the 1st century CE (end of Period III, so Taylor).

Doubts have also arisen about the identity of the site's occupants, and the purpose of the settlement. Alan D. Crown and Lena Cansdale have suggested that Qumran from the 1st century BCE to 1st century CE was a commercial

located on a significant trade route, with the settlement serving as a fort designed to guard an important pass or villa. Norman Golb argued Qumran of this time was a secular fortress. According to Yizhar Hirschfeld, following the suggestions of Robert and Pauline Donceel-Voûte, Qumran was a fortified villa that functioned in connection with the lucrative opobalsam trade, being connected by roads to En Gedi and Jericho, as well as to Hyrcania and Jerusalem. Yizhak Magen and Yuval Peleg have suggested that Qumran was a fortress that was turned into a pottery manufacturing centre. However, both Jodi Magness and Hanan Eshel have continued to defend many of de Vaux's most significant conclusions, and have stressed the site's key identification as an Essene settlement.



Dead Sea Scrolls Museum in Jerusalem

At least two dozen tefillin scroll fragments were known to have been found during excavations of the limestone caves overlooking the Dead Sea at Qumran in the 1950s (several phylactery boxes and straps were unearthed as well). They were among the world-famous cache of thousands of scrolls and scroll fragments containing biblical and sectarian texts from the Second Temple period. Since their discovery, the Qumran scrolls have been housed at the Israel Museum, and scholars have pored over the ancient documents and opened a

window into ancient Jewish theology.

But these nine latest tiny scrolls had been overlooked — until now.

Dr. Yonatan Adler, a lecturer at Ariel University and a post-doctoral researcher on Qumran tefillin at Hebrew University, was searching through the Israel Antiquities Authority's climate-controlled storerooms in the Har Hotzvim neighborhood of Jerusalem in May 2013. There he found a phylactery case from Qumran among the organic artifacts stored in climate-controlled warehouses. Suspecting the case could contain a heretofore undocumented scroll, he had it scanned by an CT at Shaare Zedek Hospital. The analysis suggested there might indeed be an unseen parchment inside.

While that analysis has yet to be confirmed, Adler was spurred on by the discovery, and in December visited the Dead Sea Scroll labs at the Israel Museum. There he found two tiny scrolls inside the compartments of a tefillin case that had been documented but then put aside some time after 1952. The scrolls were never photographed or examined, and so have remained bound inside the leather box for roughly 2,000 years.



Uncovered in Jerusalem, 9 tiny unopened Dead Sea Scrolls

Commentary on the Gospel of John

I. The Only-begotten, the Eternal Word;

His Glory and His Manifestation

Chapter 1

1:1-18. The prologue: The Word – who He was and what He became

Verses 1-13. The Word – who He was.

Verses 14-18. The Word – who He Became

1:19-51. The Testimony of John and of Jesus' first disciples

Verses 19-28. Testimony of John the Baptist

John's Baptism of Repentance

John's purpose was to get the people ready for the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah said of him, *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God'"* (Isaiah 40:3).

In the Old Testament he was compared to the prophet Elijah and it was said of John, *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse"* (Malachi 4:5-6).

This is what John did. He taught people to leave sins behind, to repent and get ready for the Messiah. *"In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!'"* (Matthew 3:1-2). He was a no-nonsense preacher who was quite blunt in his scoldings (Luke 3:1-18).

John's baptism was stated to be unto repentance; that is, it led up to repentance and the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 3:11). Jesus' baptism, however, made people followers of Christ.

"After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. For John had not yet been thrown into prison. Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. And they came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified--behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!' John answered and said, 'A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. 'You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' 'He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. 'He must increase, but I must decrease'" (John 3:22-30).

"Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples)" (John 4:1-2).

Yes, people who had been baptized by John were baptized again into Jesus' baptism. Much later Paul runs across twelve men who had been baptized by John, but not into Jesus' baptism.

"And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:1-5).

The concept of a baptism of fire comes from a statement made by John the Baptist.

"And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:10-12 and also in Luke 3:16-17).

This is the only time the concept of baptism is connected with fire. The word "baptism" means a complete immersion, and so he is talking about a complete immersion in fire.

From the full statement of John we see that the fire here deals with the separation of the just from the wicked and the eternal punishment of the wicked. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is for the just, but the baptism in fire is for the wicked. Basically John is stating that he, as a prophet of God, was given authority to convert people. But Jesus would be greater than he because Jesus has the authority to both convert people and to destroy the unconverted.

"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

Starting with Acts 2, the baptism taught by the disciples had a different purpose than the baptism of John. Paul talks about this at length:

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:3-11).

Chapter 1:1-2:22

Verses 29-34. The baptism of Jesus

Verses 35-51. Testimony of Jesus' first disciples

- 1. The Word: the Creator, the Life and the Light. (John 1:1-4.)*
- 2. The Light and the Darkness. The Light not Known. (John 1:5-11.)*
- 3. The Word Made Flesh and Its Gracious Results. (John 1:12-18.)*
- 4. The Witness of John. (John 1:19-34.)*
- 5. Following Him and Dwelling With Him. (John 1:35-42.)*
- 6. The Next Day. Nathanael's Unbelief and Confession. (John 1:43-49.)*
- 7. The Promise of Greater Things. (John 1:50-51.)*

Majestic is the beginning of this Gospel. Hundreds of pages might be written on the opening verses and their meaning would not be exhausted. They are inexhaustible. The name of our Lord as "the Word" (Logos) is exclusively used

by the Apostle John. The Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, who lived in the days of the Apostle John, also speaks of the Word. Critics have therefore claimed that the Apostle copied from Philo and reproduced his mystical Jewish philosophy. However, this theory has been exploded. Professor Harnack, the eminent German scholar, states "the Logos of John has little more in common with the Logos of Philo than the name." It is significant that the rabbinical paraphrases on the Old Testament (Targumim) speak hundreds of times of the Lord as "the Word" (Memra). These ancient Jewish paraphrases describe Jehovah, when He reveals Himself, by the term "Memra," which is the same as the Greek "Logos"--"the Word." Genesis 3:8 they paraphrased "they heard the Word walking in the garden." These Jewish comments ascribe the creation of the world to the Word. It was "the Word" which communed with the Patriarchs. According to them "the Word" redeemed Israel out of Egypt; "the Word" was dwelling in the tabernacle; "the Word" spake out of the fire of Horeb; "the Word" brought them into the promised land. All the relationship of the Lord with Israel is explained by them as having been through "the Word." In the light of the opening verses of the Gospel of John these Jewish statements appear more than interesting. [These paraphrases in the form we possess them were written in Aramaic about 300 A.D. But long before they were written they must have existed as traditions among the Jewish people.] The Only Begotten is called "The Word" because He is the express image of God, as the invisible thought is expressed by the corresponding word. He is the revealer and interpreter of the mind and will of God.

"In (the) beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Three great facts are made known concerning our Lord. 1. He is eternal. He did not begin to exist. He has no beginning, for "in the beginning was the Word." He ever was. Before time began and matter was created, He was. 2. He was and is a Person distinct from God the Father, yet one with Him. "The Word was with God." 3. The Lord Jesus Christ is God, for we read "The Word was God." He could therefore not be a being, a creature like the angels. The verses which follow add to this the fact that He is the Creator of all things and the Source of all light and life. Here is the most complete refutation of the wicked teachings concerning the Person of our Lord, which were current in the days of the Apostle, which have been in the world ever since and which will continue to exist till the Lord comes. Arianism, which makes our Lord a Being inferior to God, is answered. So is Socinianism, Unitarianism, Russellism, International Bible Student Association, which teach that Christ was not very God, but a man. Well has it been said in view of the revelation contained in the first verse: "to maintain in the face of such a text, as some so called 'Christians' do, that our Lord Jesus Christ was only a man, is a mournful proof of the perversity of the human heart." And in Him was life, which must be applied to

spiritual life. Spiritual life and light is impossible apart from the second Person of the Godhead. The commentator Bengel makes a helpful statement on the opening verses of this chapter. "In the first and second verses of this chapter mention is made of a state before the creation of the world; in the third verse, the world's creation; in the fourth, the time of man's uprightness; in the fifth, the time of man's decline and fall."

John the forerunner is in this Gospel presented to bear witness of the Light. How this reveals the darkness which is in the world that He, Who is the Life and the Light, needed one to announce His coming! "The true light was that which, coming into the world, lighteth every man." (John 1:9; correct translation.) And when He came into the world He had made, the world knew Him not. Even His own, to whom He came, received Him not. This is His rejection by Israel, which in detail is described in the first three Gospels.

John 1:12-13 make known the gracious results for those, who receive Him, who believe on His name. The world had not known its Creator; Israel had rejected Him. After the great work of the Cross had been accomplished, the work done for guilty man, the good news is made known. As many as receive Him, to them He gives the right to be the children of God. The new birth is here mentioned for the first time; it is the communication of the divine nature by believing on His name. Believing on Him, receiving Him, we are begotten again and are therefore the children of God. Of this nothing is said in the preceding Gospels. The Gospel of John begins where the others end. The Authorized Version is incorrect in having "sons of God." (The same error appears in 1 John 3:2.) John always speaks of "children" not of "sons." The expression "children of God" denotes the fact that we are God's born ones, born by the new birth into the family of God. "Sons of God" we are called in view of our destiny in Christ and with Him. As sons of God we are also the heirs of God and fellow- heirs of Jesus Christ. Nowhere is it said that we are heirs of God because we are children of God. Our Lord is never called a child of God, for He is not born of God as we are; He is "Son." (Acts 4:30 is incorrect; not "holy child Jesus," but "holy servant.") John 1:14 gives the fact of His incarnation. Here then we read what the Word became. It is almost impossible to believe that men who claim scholarship, who deny the fact of the incarnation, can state as they do, that the Gospel of John has nothing to say on this great foundation truth of our faith. These apostates must be blinded. The great mystery is made known here as it is in Matthew and in Luke. The Eternal Word, the Word which ever was, the Word which is God, became flesh. He became so by the union of two perfect and distinct natures in one Person. His person however cannot be divided. And when He became flesh, took on the creature's form, He did not cease to be very God; He emptied Himself of His outward glory, but not of His Deity. He became truly

man, but He was holy, sinless; not alone did He not sin, but He could not sin. There is an ancient Latin statement which is worth repeating. It represents “the Word having become flesh as saying: “I am what I was, that is God”--“I was not what I am, that is Man”--“I am now called both, God and Man.” In Him they beheld His glory, the glory of the Only Begotten, full of grace and truth. Grace and truth came by Him. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, declared Him, Whom no one hath seen at any time. These are great statements. The word “grace” is found here for the first time in the New Testament. And He, the Incarnate Word, and He alone is full of Grace and Truth. Out of His fullness have we all received, and grace upon grace. It is all grace, that those receive from Him who believe on His name.

The witness of John the forerunner is different from his witness and preaching as given by the Synoptics. They report mostly his testimony to the nation. Here we read when he saw Jesus coming to him, he saith, “Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.” (Often Christians quote “sins of the world.” If our Lord had taken away the sins of the world, the whole world would be saved. Our Lord only bore the sins of those who believe on Him. All who do not believe die in their sins and are lost.) He knew that He Who came to him was to be the Sin-bearer. He knew that He is the true Sacrifice for sin, the true Passover-Lamb, the Lamb which Isaiah predicted. And he testified that the Lamb of God was to take away (not taking away then, or has taken away) the sin of the world. The Lamb of God had to die and the ultimate results of His death are announced in this testimony. They have not yet come, but will be realized in the new heaven and the new earth, when all things are made new.

Beginning with John 1:35 we read what happened the next day after John had given his testimony concerning the Lamb of God. The results of that testimony now appear. Once more John points to Him: “Behold the Lamb of God.” He, who was the greatest prophet of the Old Testament, directs his disciples to the Lord. The two disciples heard him speak and followed Jesus. These are the blessed steps: speaking the message, hearing (and in hearing believing) then following the Lord. And He knew them and their hearts’ desire. His grace was drawing them to Himself. Their question, “Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?” is answered by that most blessed invitation, “Come and see.” These are the first words of our Lord besides His question, written in this Gospel. He wanted them to know Him, to be in communion with Himself. They abode with Him that day. It foreshadows the results of the Gospel of Grace. The unmentioned place where they dwelt with Him is typical of the heavenly place where He is now. In faith we see where He abides, and by faith we know we are there in Him. It is a beautiful picture of the gathering which takes place throughout this Gospel-age. He is the Centre, and “Come and see” are still His gracious words to all who

hear and believe. And how Andrew at once testified and brought his brother Simon to Jesus!

John 1:43-49 unfold another picture. Nathanael (gift of God) would not believe. Philip had testified to him “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael under the fig tree, where the Lord had seen him, is the type of the remnant of Israel. When the Lord spoke to him he owned Him as the Son of God, the King of Israel. So all Israel in a future day will confess Him. Notice the first day, when the first company is gathered to abide with Him (typical of this age and the gathering of a heavenly company); then the second day, when the Lord reveals Himself to unbelieving Nathanael (typical of the conversion of the remnant of Israel).

The last two verses of this marvellous chapter will find their fulfilment in that day when heaven is opened. Then greater things will take place. The angels of God will be seen ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. It will take place when He comes the second time, when Israel acknowledges Him as their King and as the Son of God.



Chapters 2-3

2. Water turned to wine;the temple cleansed

Verses 1-12. The first miracle

Verses 13-25. The temple cleansed

3. Nicodemus and the new birth

Verses 1-21. Discourse on regeneration

Verses 22-36. John the Baptist's testimony

Chapter 2:1-22

1. The Marriage in Cana. (John 2:1-11.)

2. The Temple Cleansed. (John 2:12-22.)

The second chapter gives the record of the first miracle reported in this Gospel. He manifested His omniscience in the previous chapter and here, in turning water into wine, He reveals Himself as the omnipotent Creator. What harmony there is between the opening of the first two chapters of the Gospel of John. The first chapter speaks of Him as the Creator of all things and in the second chapter He manifests the power of the Creator. He needed no wine, no grapes, no mellowing process, to furnish the best wine. He but commanded and it was so. This is omnipotence. In John 2:17 of the previous chapter there is a contrast between Moses representing the law dispensation and our Lord Jesus Christ through whom grace and truth have come. The first miracle Moses did, was turning water into blood, typical of the ministration of the law unto death; the first miracle of our Lord turns water into wine, which is typical of joy and the ministration of Grace which is unto life.

The many applications and lessons of the marriage in Cana and the changing of water into wine we have to omit. But we call attention to the dispensational aspect. The third day* mentioned connects with the preceding chapter. (The Numbers 3:1-51; Numbers 7:1-89 are prominent in this Gospel. Three times the Lord went into Galilee, three times into Judea; three Passovers are mentioned, etc. There are seven signs or miracles, seven times the Lord speaks "I am"; seven times the phrase "These things have I spoken unto you, etc." is used.) On the first day the two disciples abode with the Lord. On the second day unbelieving Nathanael confessed Him as Son of God and King of Israel. On the

third day there was a marriage. The third day clearly indicates the time of Israel's blessing and restoration. Beautiful is the predicted and still future confession of Israel: "After two days will He revive us, in the third day He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight." (Hosea 6:1-3). The marriage typifies the restored relationship of the Lord with Israel. That is why the mother of Jesus (type of Israel) and His disciples (those who come with Him to the marriage) are mentioned. And this miracle is spoken of as the "beginning of miracles," when He manifested His glory. When He comes again and changes existing conditions, when Israel enters into the promised and blessed relationship, when He manifests His glory, then the wine of joy will not fail. Better things are promised and better things will come, when that blessed day appears. But "His hour is not yet come." It will surely come.

The words of rebuke to Mary clearly show that she erred and was as fallible as any other woman. The Lord rebuked her because He did not want her to interfere with Him and His work. "She erred here, perhaps from an affectionate desire to bring honour to her Son, as she erred on other occasions. The words before us were meant to remind her that she must henceforth leave our Lord to choose His own times and modes of acting. The season of subjection to her and Joseph was over. The season of His public ministry had at length begun. In carrying on that ministry, she must not presume to suggest to Him. The utter contrariety of this verse to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church about the Virgin Mary is too palpable to be explained away. She was not without error and sin, as Romish writers have dared to assert, and was not meant to be prayed to and adored. If our Lord would not allow His mother even to suggest to Him the working of a miracle, we may well suppose that all Roman Catholic prayers to the Virgin Mary, and especially prayers entreating her to 'command her Son,' are most offensive and blasphemous in His eyes." (J.C. Ryle.)

The purging of the temple is closely connected with the marriage and miracle of Cana. When He comes again the Father's house, the temple, will be cleansed. "Yea every pot in Jerusalem shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts ... and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite (which means translated: merchantman) in the house of the Lord of hosts." (Zechariah 14:21). This is the first cleansing of the temple, mentioned exclusively by John. The synoptic Gospels report the cleansing which occurred at the close of His ministry. He manifested in it His authority as the Son of God, and Psalms 69:9 was fulfilled in His action. (The whole transaction is a remarkable one, as exhibiting our Lord using more physical exertion, and energetic bodily action, than we see Him using at any other period of His ministry. A word, a touch, or the reaching-forth of a hand, are the ordinary limits of His actions. Here we see Him doing no less than four things:-- (1) Making the scourge;--(2) Driving out the animals;--(3)

Pouring out on the ground the changers' money;--(4) Overthrowing the tables. On no occasion do we find Him showing such strong outward marks of indignation, as at the sight of the profanation of the temple. Remembering that the whole transaction is a striking type of what Christ will do at His second coming, we may get some idea of the deep meaning of that remarkable expression, "The wrath of the Lamb." (Revelation 6:16)--Expository Thoughts on John.))

Then He spoke of His coming death and resurrection in a veiled form. The Jews and His disciples did not understand what temple He meant. He spoke of His own body. "In three days I will raise it up." His resurrection was both through the power of God and by Himself. God raised Him up and He raised Himself up. This statement properly belongs to this Gospel in which we behold Him as the Son of God. The same statement we find in John 10:18 --"I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again."

Verses 23-36

II. Eternal Life Imparted:

What it is and What it Includes –

Chapter 2:23-17

The second part of this Gospel contains the blessed teachings the Son of God gave concerning eternal life, how it is imparted and what it includes. Everything in these chapters is new. The story of Nicodemus, the woman at Sychar's well, the healing of the impotent man, the discourses of our Lord, etc., are not reported by the synoptic Gospels. There is not a word of the Sermon on the Mount reported by John; the many miracles, so significantly arranged in Matthew, are omitted (except the feeding of the 5000); nor do we find a single parable concerning the Kingdom of Heaven. The progressive revelation concerning eternal life will be brought out in the annotations. As already stated the teachings begin with the new birth, in which eternal life is imparted, and end with the destiny of those who are born again. This is revealed in His high priestly prayer, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

CHAPTER 2:23-3:36

1. The Many Who Believed on Him. (John 2:23-25.)

2. Nicodemus and the New Birth. (John 3:1-8.)

3. How the New Birth is Accomplished. (John 3:9-21.)

4. The Last Testimony of John. (John 3:22-36.)

He worked many miracles in Jerusalem, which are unreported by John. Many therefore believed in His name, but the Omniscient One knew that they were only convinced, but their hearts had not been touched and so they did not receive Him as the Son of God. But there was one who was more deeply exercised, an earnest, seeking soul, Nicodemus. He came to Jesus by night and addressed Him as Rabbi, acknowledging that He was a teacher come from God. The Lord did not permit him to go on with his address nor to state the object of his visit. The Lord treated him in an abrupt, almost discourteous, way and informed him at once of the absolute necessity of the new birth. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again (literally: born from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Not teaching, mere knowledge, was the need Nicodemus had to see the Kingdom, but to be born from above.

But what Kingdom does our Lord mean? It refers primarily to the Kingdom of the Old Testament, promised to Israel. When that Kingdom comes, with the Return of the Lord, only those of Israel will enter in who are born again. The unbelieving and apostate mass of Jews will be excluded from that earthly, millennial Kingdom. Only the believing remnant inherits that Kingdom to come. This may be learned from Ezekiel 36:1-38 and Isaiah 4:3, and other passages. That is why the Lord said to Nicodemus: "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

But the truth our Lord gave to Nicodemus has a wider application. Man is spiritually dead, destitute of spiritual life. In order to enter the Kingdom of God, to be in the presence of God, man must be born anew. Such a statement is nowhere found in the preceding Gospels. In the Gospel of John, the Gospel of Eternal Life, it is put into the foreground. Nicodemus is the only person to whom the Lord spoke of the absolute necessity of the new birth. He never made such a statement to the publicans and the harlots. And who was Nicodemus? A Pharisee, and therefore an extremely religious man. A ruler of the Jews, which necessitated a moral life. The teacher of Israel, one who possessed much learning. Religiousness, morality, education and culture are insufficient to save man and give him a place in the Kingdom of God. The new birth is the one thing needed. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The flesh is the old nature which every human being brings into the world; it is a fallen, a corrupt nature and can never be anything else. And "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:8). The natural man may do anything he pleases, become religious and philanthropic, but he cannot please God. What then is the new

birth? It is not reformation. Nor is it, as so often stated, an action of the Holy Spirit to make an evil nature good. The flesh cannot be changed into something better. The new birth is the impartation of a new nature, the divine nature, by the Holy Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." This new nature is absolutely holy, as the old nature is absolutely corrupt. This new nature is the only thing which fits man to be in the presence of God.

But what is the meaning of "water" in John 3:5? "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." The water is claimed by ritualists to mean baptism. If a little water is put upon the head of an infant, they would have us believe, regeneration takes place. Others hold upon this statement of our Lord that the water is Christian baptism, and that therefore water-baptism is necessary to salvation. But the words of our Lord have nothing whatever to do with baptism. (Ezekiel 36:25-27 must be linked with John 3:5 and must be considered here as a national promise to Israel, how they will enter the Kingdom. But the verses in Ezekiel have absolutely nothing whatever to do with baptism. To apply them thus is ridiculous.) The water cannot mean Christian baptism. Christian baptism (an entirely different thing from the Jewish baptism of John) was not instituted till after His death and resurrection. If it meant Christian baptism, the Lord's rebuke to Nicodemus would be unjust. How could he know something that was still undivulged? Water in this passage is the figure of the Word of God, which the Spirit of God uses for the quickening of souls. The following passages will demonstrate this fact: Ephesians 5:25-26; 1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18. Begotten again by the Word of God, and water is the figure of that Word.

The Lord speaks next of revealing heavenly things (in distinction from earthly things relating to Israel). Then the Cross is revealed by which the heavenly things are realized, and how lost man is to be saved and receive eternal life (the new nature). The Son of Man must be lifted up. He Who knew no sin was made sin for us. "God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."--"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent His Only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:9-10). Blessed words these! It is by believing on the Son of God, who died for our sins, that we are saved and are born again.

John bears his final testimony in John 3:23-26. He testifies of Christ as the bridegroom, who is to have the bride. John calls himself the friend of the bridegroom. "He must increase, but I must decrease." Note the three &(must's" in this chapter. "Ye must be born again"; the necessity of the new birth. "The

Son of Man must be lifted up”; the necessity of the death of the Lord to make salvation possible. “He must increase, but I must decrease”; the result of salvation. The final testimony of John the Baptist takes us beyond the cross. (John 3:35-36). Blessed assurance! He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.--Solemn declaration! He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Themes in John’s Gospel

Listed below are various themes that are threaded throughout the Gospel of John. These themes intertwine and support one another throughout John's gospel. To grasp the message of John's writing, one must search out and follow these themes through the whole of his gospel.

THEME ONE: The Light vs. Darkness Theme

The dual between **light** (Christ and his ways) and **darkness** (Satan and the ways of the world) is one of the more obvious themes in the Gospel of John. Examples of this are found in almost every chapter and every page of the Gospel of John.

THEME TWO: The Water/Life Theme

Water is one of the most significant elements in sustaining life. In the Gospel of John, Christ is shown as having power of water and thus has the power to give living water. Note the following examples:

- (1) Christ turns water to wine (John 2)
- (2) Christ's discourse on Living Waters at Jacob's well (John 4)
- (3) Christ heals the invalid man at the Pools of Bethesda (John 5)
- (4) Christ walks on water (John 6)
- (5) Christ offers living water during Feast of Tabernacles (John 7)
- (6) Christ heals the man born blind at the Pool of Siloam (John 9)
- (7) Christ washes the feet of the twelve (John 13)

THEME THREE: The Seven Signs and the Seven Discourses

The first half of the Gospel of John is built around seven signs (miracles) and seven discourses. The signs and the discourses seem to be related to each other; the discourses speak of various powers the Saviour has that are necessary in helping each child of our Heavenly Father to gain eternal life and the signs or miracles confirms that the Saviour has those powers. The

seven signs and seven discourses are as follows:

1st SIGN: Water converted to wine (John 2:1-11)

1st DISCOURSE: The natural man converted to the spiritual man (John 3:1-21)

2nd SIGN: Bringing life to the nobleman's son (John 4:46-54)

2nd DISCOURSE: The living waters that bring everlasting life (John 4:1-42)

3rd SIGN: The healing of the invalid on the Sabbath (John 5:1-18)

3rd DISCOURSE: The Divine Son, the Lord of the Sabbath (John 5:19-47)

4th Sign: Miracle feeding of the multitude with bread (John 6:1-15)

4th DISCOURSE: Christ is the bread of life (John 6:22-66)

5th SIGN: Jesus walks on water (John 6:12-21)

5th DISCOURSE: Christ, who will walk into the presence of the Father, offers living water to all (John 7:14-39)

6th SIGN: Healing of the man born blind (John 9)

6th DISCOURSE: Christ is the Light of the World (John 8:12-59)

7th SIGN: The raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11)

7th DISCOURSE: Christ, the Good Shepherd, will lay down His life for his sheep that he might bring about the resurrection (John 10:1-18)

THEME FOUR: The Replacement/Transcendent/Fulfilment Theme

For John, the coming of Christ brought about a replacement, transcendence, and fulfilment of events and places which were held sacred among the Jews. In other words, Christ is *the* ultimate fulfilment of the sacred events and places of the Old Testament. The following are examples of this theme.

(1) The replacement of the Temple with the body of Christ (either resurrection or body of the Church) [John 2:13-22]

(2) The replacement of the worship in the sacred mountains of Gerizim and Ebal with the worship of Christ [John 4]

(3) The replacement of the Sabbath worship of the Pharisees with the proper worship of the Sabbath taught by Christ [John 5]

(4) The replacement and fulfilment of the Feast of the Passover with

Christ, the Bread of life [John 6]

(5) The replacement and fulfilment of the Feast of the Tabernacles with Christ, the light and life of the world [John 7-9]

THEME FIVE: The Seven I Am's

Throughout his gospel, John often records the Savior using the phrase, "I am". Many scholars have noted seven particular "I am" declarations that emphasize just *who* and *what* Jesus is. These declarations are important to John's testimony of Christ. The seven "I am" declarations are as follows:

- (1) "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35; see also 41, 48, 51)
- (2) "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12)
- (3) "I am the door of the sheep" (John 10:7, 9)
- (4) "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11, 14)
- (5) "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25)
- (6) "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)
- (7) "I am the vine" (John 15:1, 5)

There are other "I am" statements that could help the reader understand what and who the Saviour is that might be added to these seven. Can you find them?

The Discourses in John's Gospel

John's gospel includes a number of rather lengthy discourses on different topics.

Some, like the discourse on the Good Shepherd, takes up most of John 10. The Farewell Discourses include all of John 14-17. These discourses differ from the sayings of Jesus in the Synoptic gospels, which are often rather brief. Moreover, the Johannine discourses often have enigmatic elements that are difficult to interpret. The progression of thought in the discourses is not always easy to follow--and this in turn compounds the challenge for the preacher.

A place to begin is with the situation presupposed by the discourses that are read during the Lenten season. All of them address a situation in which the followers of Jesus face some kind of threat. The discourses envision a horizon that extends beyond Easter to life in the community of faith after Jesus is no longer visibly present with his followers. This is put most vividly in John 14:18, where Jesus says that he will not leave his disciples as orphans. What the disciples might feel is that they are orphaned or abandoned. But the words Jesus speaks assure them that this is not the case. The same is true of the good

shepherd in John 10. Throughout that passage there are thieves and robbers who threaten the flock. Again, Jesus' words give assurance.

The placement of these passages during the Easter season can seem odd. If Easter is supposed to be a time of celebration, the passages from John candidly recognize that life after Easter is not all blissful. The risen Jesus has come to give life, yet death remains. The risen Jesus promises life with God, yet that can seem distant. These passages press for theological depth in preaching. The good news is not that the faithful no longer have issues. Rather, it is that the gospel challenges the forces that threaten despair. The gift of life is given despite the presence of death. Relationship with Christ remains real despite the fact that his followers see him no longer.

Since the setting and themes of the discourses overlap, it can be helpful to identify a range of issues that can be addressed throughout the season. For example, the good shepherd discourse has themes of Christian community, the first half of John 14 focuses on hope of life in the Father's house, the last half of John 14 includes the promise of the Spirit, and the reading from John 17 considers what it means to belong to Jesus while living in the world.

The discourses do not necessarily follow a clear and logical progression. Jesus introduces a theme, moves on to another theme and then circles back to pick up an earlier point. For clarity in preaching it can be best to work with a small section of text. For example, the good shepherd passage in John 10 begins with a complex cast of characters. There are thieves and bandits, a shepherd, a gatekeeper, and the gate itself. Not all of these need to be worked into the sermon. Focus can be helpful. Similarly, John 14:1-3 focuses on the Father's house, 14:4-7 deals with Jesus as the way, 14:8-10 considers Jesus' relationship to the Father, and 14:11-14 takes up the theme of Jesus' works and the faith and works of his followers. One section of this complex passage may well be enough for a sermon.

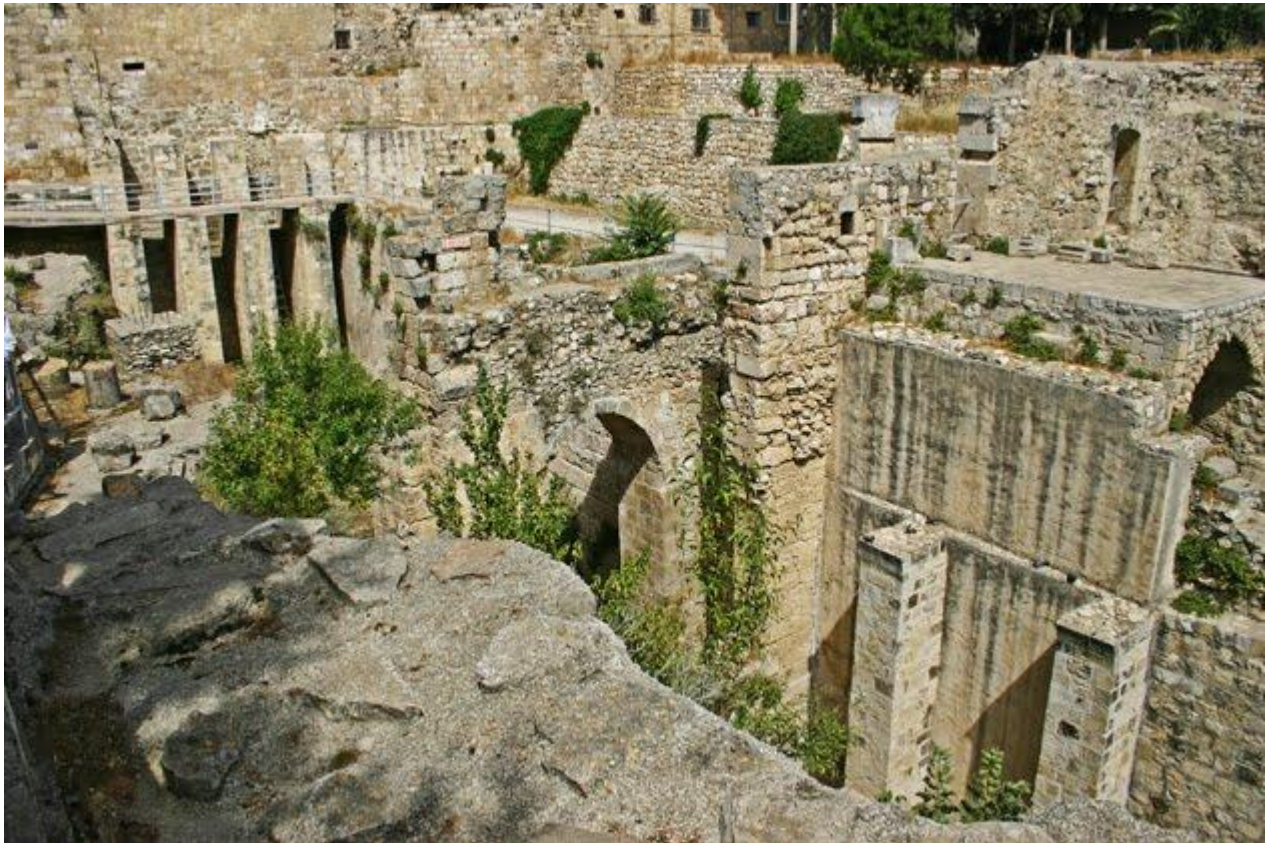
The discourses often include one or more images. These can be developed in ways that make the sermon more vivid. For example, John 10 identifies Jesus as the gate to the sheepfold. A gate is something that can be pictured in words. A gate creates a boundary. Yet it is a permeable boundary. A gate is not a wall. A gate shows that there is a difference between belief and unbelief, between the community of faith and the world outside. Yet the gate also allows for movement. People come into the gathered community and out into the world. This is the rhythm of faith.

Similarly, Jesus speaks of life in his Father's house with its many rooms. That

invites reflection on a spacious dwelling place. But then note the twist. There is a shift in emphasis from place to person. After picturing his Father's house, which is presumably in heaven, Jesus says that he comes to bring people to "himself" (14:3). Spatial imagery eventually points to the centrality of relationship.

The prayer in John 17 continually interweaves themes that readily lend themselves to abstraction. Glory, the world, knowing--all of these operate at an elevated conceptual level. Therefore, it can be helpful to use other parts of the gospel to show how what is said here takes compelling form. For example, Jesus says that he has glorified God by "finishing" the work God gave him to do (17:4). This recalls the signs that he performed, which revealed God's glory. It also anticipates his crucifixion. That is where he can say, "It is finished," for there he reveals the glory of divine love (19:30). One might also think about analogies with common practice. Glory is what we find in the winner's circle. It takes shape in medals, trophies, and photo opportunities. How is that similar to or different from the kind of glory that Jesus speaks about?

Finally, we might return to where we started. The discourses in John's gospel address issues of living the life of faith in a context where there are any number of things that threaten faith. These discourses are not academic exercises or armchair ruminations on obscure topics. Each discourse speaks to Christians in this world. The words are spoken to foster relationships with the Christ who is no longer visible in incarnate form, but who continues to claim and call people to faith and life.



Bethesda – The Pool and the Church

Chapter 4

4.The Samaritan woman and eternal life

Verses 1-45. Jesus and the Samaritans

Verses 46-54. The second sign

Verses 1-54

- 1. He Must Needs Pass Through Samaria. (John 4:1-5.)*
- 2. At Sychar's Well; Jesus and the Samaritan Woman. (John 4:6-26.)*
- 3. The Woman's Witness and the Believing Samaritans. (John 4:27-42.)*
- 4. His Return to Galilee. (John 4:43-45.)*
- 5. The Second Miracle, the Healing of the Nobleman's Son. (John 4:46-54.)*

In the Gospel of Matthew the Lord told His disciples not to go into the way of the Gentiles and not to enter into any city of the Samaritans. (Matthew 10:5). He sent them to preach the nearness of the Kingdom. Here He must needs go through Samaria. He had left Jerusalem and was on His way to Galilee and passing through Samaria He manifested His marvellous Grace. Tired on account of the way, an evidence of His true humanity, "He sat thus on the well." There He rested in unwearied love, waiting for the poor, fallen woman, whose sad story He knew so well.

To follow the beautiful account of His dealings with the Samaritan woman in all its blessed details is impossible in our brief annotations. What mercy and grace He exhibited in seeking such a one! What wisdom and patience in dealing with her, bearing with her ignorance! And what power in drawing her to Himself and making her a messenger to bring others to Him! How different He treated her in comparison with Nicodemus in the preceding chapter.

The Lord speaks to the Samaritan woman concerning the living water, which He can give to all that ask Him. The central verse of His teaching is the fourteenth, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The well or fountain of water in the believer is the indwelling Spirit. In John 7:37-39 the Lord speaks also of living water and there the interpretation of it is given. "This He spake of the Spirit, whom they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The believer has therefore not only eternal life, but also the gift of the Spirit, Who dwells in him as the spring of living water.

The new worship is next revealed in answer to the question of the woman. John 4:21-24. The Samaritans worshipped on a mountain (Gerizim); the Jews in the temple, but the hour was coming when the true worshippers would worship the Father in the Spirit. No longer would true believers worship God as the God of Israel, but as Father. It is to be a worship in the Spirit and not confined to a locality. Christian worship has for its foundation the possession of eternal life; the indwelling Spirit is the power of that worship. Only true believers, such who are born again and possess the gift of the Spirit, can be worshippers. "For we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Philippians 3:3). And such worshippers the Father seeketh. In Old Testament times the Jews worshipped in an earthly place. In the coming, the millennial age, nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord of hosts in the great millennial Temple. (Isaiah 2:1-4; Zechariah 14:16, etc.) This present dispensation is the dispensation of Grace, and the Father

seeketh worshippers who worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. Thus we are brought in the Gospel of John altogether upon the ground of grace.

Then He revealed Himself to the woman. “Jesus saith to her, I that speak to thee am He.” She was face to face with the Messiah; she stood in the presence of Jehovah. She left her waterpot to tell others the good news of the living water. The earthly things were forgotten. And what a messenger she became! How her simple testimony was blessed in the conversion of souls! He abode there two days and is owned and proclaimed not alone as the promised Messiah but as the Saviour of the world. (John 4:42).

Once more we see Him at Cana of Galilee, and the nobleman’s son, who was sick at Capernaum, is healed by the Lord. The nobleman represents typically Israel. The word the Lord addressed to him fits that nation. “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.” How different from Samaria, where He did no miracle and yet they believed. And as the nobleman and his whole house believed, so will Israel believe in a future day.

Chapter 5

5. Infirm man healed

Verses 1-9. The third sign in John’s gospel – the infirm man healed at Bethesda

Verses 10-18. Opposition of the Jews

Verses 19-47. Discourse on the source of eternal life

Verses 1-47

1. The Healing of the Impotent Man. (John 5:1-9.)

2. The Opposition of the Jews. (John 5:10-18.)

3. His Unity with the Father. (John 5:19-23.)

4. The Present Hour. Believers Delivered from Death and Judgment. (John 5:24-25.)

5. The Future Hour. His Power to Raise the Dead. (John 5:26-29.)

6. Witness Concerning Himself. (John 5:30-32.)

7. *The Witness of John.* (John 5:33-35.)

8. *The Witness of His Works.* (John 5:36.)

9. *The Witness of the Father.* (John 5:37-38.)

10. *The Witness of the Scriptures, and the Unbelief of the Jews.* (John 5:39-47.)

The teachings contained in this chapter are closely linked with the third and fourth chapters. He went up to Jerusalem again. In the foreground stands the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda with its five porches. An angel troubled the water at certain seasons, so that some were healed. We believe that it was actually so, though we cannot explain it. Many critics attack this occurrence and reject its genuineness. ("After all there is no more real difficulty in the account before us, than in the history of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, the various cases of Satanic possession, or the release of Peter from prison by an angel. Once admit the existence of angels, their ministry on earth, and the possibility of their interposition to carry out God's designs, and there is nothing that ought to stumble us in the passage. The true secret of some of the objections to it, is the modern tendency to regard all miracles as useless lumber, which must be thrown overboard, if possible, and cast out of the Sacred Narrative on every occasion. Against this tendency we must watch and be on our guard.") But the impotent man could not avail himself of the opportunity for he was helpless. Such was Israel's condition under the law. The thirty-eight years point back to Israel's wandering in the wilderness. Furthermore the impotent man presents a striking picture of the utter helplessness of man as a sinner. By His word the Lord Jesus made him perfectly whole, so that he took up his bed and walked.

Opposition and objection from the Jews followed at once. They accused the healed man of breaking the Sabbath. He evidently did not know the Lord at all; only after He had spoken to him (John 5:14) did he find out that it was Jesus. Then he told the Jews. Their hatred was turned at once against the Lord. They persecuted Him and sought to slay Him because He had done this miracle on the Sabbath. The Lord's answer is most blessed. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." It is the first time in this Gospel that He speaks of God as "My Father." He, the Son, was in their midst to make the Father known. He told them that His Father works and that the Son works. Sin made this work necessary. He stood in their presence and claimed perfect and unbroken fellowship with His Father.

The Jews knew what He meant. Had He said "Our Father" instead of "My Father" no word of protest would have escaped their lips. They knew His words

could mean but one thing, that He is equal with God, by saying that God was His Father. Augustine remarked on this verse: "Behold the Jews understood what the Arians (deniers of His Deity) would not understand." And He accepted the charge of the Jews as a correct one. "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God." (Philippians 2:6). His words which follow declare His perfect unity with the Father in His work; He is the Beloved of the Father; the Father raiseth up the dead, so does He; judgment is committed unto the Son; He is to be honoured as the Father is honoured. "Whosoever does not honor the Son with equal honour to that which he pays to the Father, however he may imagine that he honours or approaches God, does not honour Him at all; because he can only be known by us as 'the Father who sent his Son.'" (Dean Alford.) Unitarianism, Russellism, the new theology and a host of other which deny the absolute Deity of our Lord, stand condemned and convicted in the presence of these wonderful words, "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father." All worship apart from the Son of God is idolatry. He claims the unity in Godhead; and such belongs to Him.

John 5:24 is a blessed Gospel text. Hearing and believing are the conditions to receive eternal life. There is no mention made of repentance. The word "repent" so prominent in the Gospel of Matthew in the Kingdom offer is not found once in the fourth Gospel. Faith and repentance, however, are inseparable. He that hears His words and believeth Him that sent the Son also repents. Again eternal life is spoken of as a present possession, "hath" not "shall have" or "shall receive later," but "hath eternal life." And with that gift comes deliverance from judgment. The reception of eternal life is a full acquittal; passed from death and all it means, into life.

"The coming hour" in John 5:25 is the present dispensation. The dead are the spiritually dead. They that hear the voice of the Son of God shall live; they receive His life. Then He speaks of an hour which was to come and which has not yet come. Two resurrections are revealed by Him; the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment. This does not mean that these two resurrections are to take place the same time, in, what is termed, a general resurrection. Elsewhere we find the full revelation concerning these two resurrections. There is the first resurrection, the resurrection of the just, and a thousand years later the resurrection of the wicked dead. (Revelation 20:1-15.) All the wrong teachings concerning the wicked dead, such as Annihilation, Restitution, Restoration, Second Chance, etc., as taught by Seventh Day Adventism, Millennial Dawnism, (also called "International Bible Students' Association" and "Jehovah's Witnesses") Universalism and others, are completely refuted by the words of our Lord in John 5:29.

The five witnesses who testify concerning Himself, that He is the Son of God, are of much importance and should be carefully studied.

Chapter 6

6. Five thousand fed; discourse on the bread of life

Verses 1-21. Feeding the five thousand

Verses 22-59. Discourse on the bread of life

Verses 60-71. Discipleship tested: Peter's confession

Verses 1-71

- 1. The Feeding of the Five Thousand Men. (John 6:1-14.)*
- 2. The Attempt to Make Him King, (John 6:15.)*
- 3. The Stormy Sea. "It is I, be not afraid." (John 6:16-21.)*
- 4. The Discourse on the Bread of Life. The Food of the Believer. (John 6:22-59.)*
- 5. The Falling Away of Disciples. (John 6:60-66)*
- 6. Peter's Confession. (John 6:67-71.)*

The events which are recorded in this chapter happened at the Sea of Galilee, the sea of Tiberias. John exclusively uses this name, an evidence that he wrote after the fall of Jerusalem. By this name the lake had become known to the Gentiles. The feeding of the five thousand is the same mentioned by the Synoptics. This great sign showed that Jehovah was in their midst, He Who had fed His Israel with manna in the wilderness and promised to satisfy the poor with bread. (Psalms 132:15.) When they had seen the great sign they acknowledged Him to be the promised Prophet who should come (Deuteronomy 18:15) and wanted to make Him King. But He departed into a mountain. He knew that all they meant by making Him King was to become the leader of a carnal movement to overthrow the hated Roman government.

The storm on the sea and His coming across the stormy sea we have had in the other Gospels.

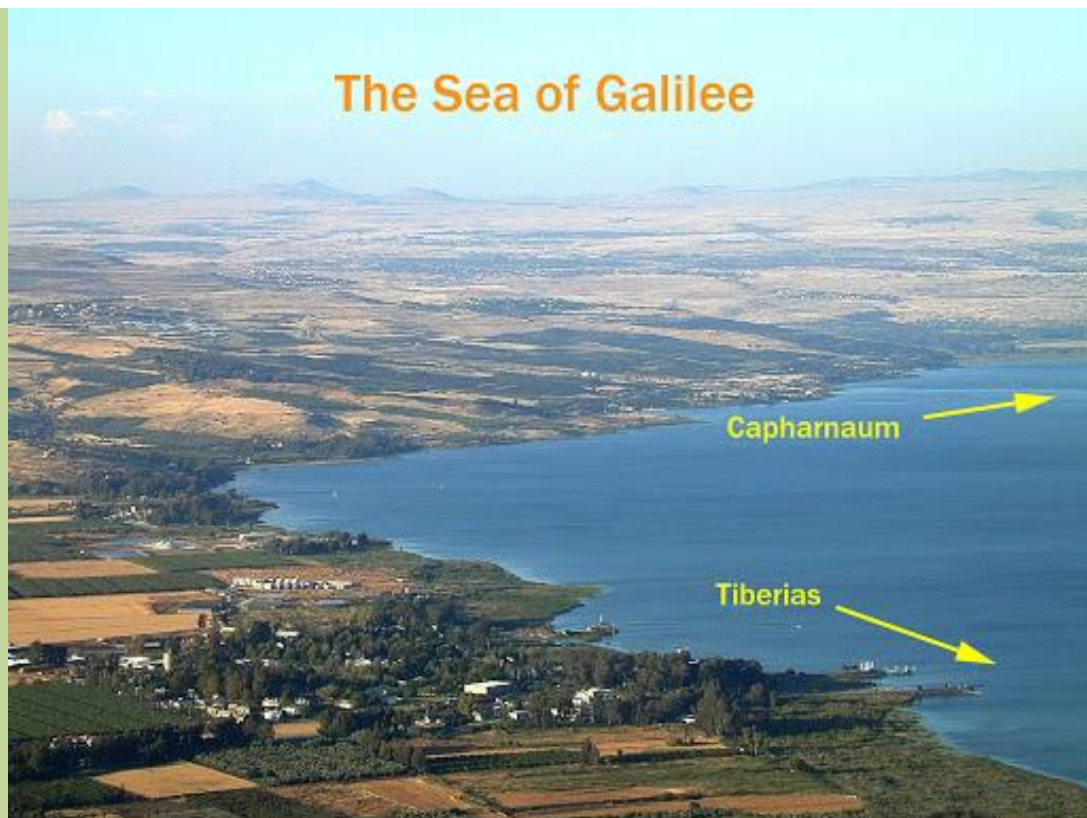
The great discourse on the Bread of Life follows. It is connected with the sign of the feeding of the multitude. When He speaks of being the Bread from Heaven

He refers to His incarnation. "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth His life for the world." They rejected that Bread. Then He speaks of eating His flesh and drinking His blood both for the reception of life and for the sustenance of that life. These words have nothing whatever to do with the Lord's supper. Bishop Ryle, who was a leader in a ritualistic church, repudiated this wrong interpretation in the following words: "For one thing, a literal 'eating and drinking' of Christ's body and blood would have been an idea utterly revolting to all Jews, and flatly contradictory to an often-repeated precept of their law.--For another thing, to take a literal view of 'eating and drinking,' is to interpose a bodily act between the soul of man and salvation. This is a thing for which there is no precedent in Scripture. The only things without which we cannot be saved are repentance and faith.--Last, but not least, to take a literal view of 'eating and drinking,' would involve most blasphemous and profane consequences. It would shut out of heaven the penitent thief. He died long after these words were spoken, without any literal eating and drinking. Will any dare to say he had 'no life' in Him?--It would admit to heaven thousands of ignorant, godless communicants in the present day. They literally eat and drink, no doubt! But they have no eternal life, and will not be raised to glory. Let these reasons be carefully pondered.

"The plain truth is, there is a morbid anxiety in fallen man to put a carnal sense on Scriptural expressions, wherever he possibly can. He struggles hard to make religion a matter of forms and ceremonies,--of doing and performing,--of sacraments and ordinances,--of sense and of sight."

The Bread of God, He Himself, gave His life for the world. He gave His body and shed His blood on the cross. It is His sacrificial, atoning death. By faith we partake of it. Without it there is no life. Note the difference in John 6:53-54. In John 6:53 He speaks of those who have eaten His flesh and drunk His blood, apart from which there is no life. By faith the sinner appropriates Him, Who gave His body and shed His blood, and then receives eternal life. In John 6:54 He speaks of a continuous eating and drinking. He is the Source of eternal life. The believer feeds on Him; the eternal life the believer has must be sustained, nourished and kept by Himself, by ever feeding on His dying love. "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20.) And the believer eating and drinking becomes one with Him. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth (literally: abideth) in Me and I in him." It is a wonderful discourse on His incarnation, His sacrificial, atoning death, and the blessed assurances given to those who believe on Him. Precious are the promises of this great chapter. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35.) "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

(John 6:37.) “Every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” [“The last day” does not mean a day of a final and universal judgment followed by the end of the world. It is the end of the Jewish age to which our Lord refers (the age which is yet to be completed in great tribulation.--Matthew 24:1-51). The first resurrection includes Old Testament saints, New Testament saints and the Jewish believers, who are martyred during the great tribulation. The first resurrection will be completed at the close of the tribulation period and followed by the setting up of the Kingdom.] (John 6:40.) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” (John 6:47.)



Archaeological light: Tiberias and the Sea of Tiberias

Bahr Tabariyeh. This is called by four different names in Scripture:

1. The "Sea of Chinnereth," or "Chinneroth" (Heb. kinneret, "harp-shaped"), for the shape of the sea (Num 34:11; Josh 12:3; 13:27).
2. The "lake of Gennesaret" (Luke 5:1), the name of the extended plain adjoining the lake.
3. The "Sea of Tiberias" (John 6:1; 21:1), the name used by the natives at this time-Bahr Tarbariyeh;
4. "Galilee" (Matt 4:18; 15:29).

The lake is about 60 miles from Jerusalem and at one time was 13 miles long and 8 miles wide at its greatest extent, although recent changes have reduced its length. Its surface is about 700 feet below sea level, and it is about 150 feet deep at its lowest point. The Jordan River flows through it, providing much of its water supply, there are springs in the lake floor. The fresh waters of the lake are clean, and they have always been well stocked with a variety of fish.

Several towns dotted its shores in NT times, but almost all of them (Bethsaida, Capernaum, Tiberias, etc.) stood on its northern and western shores because the eastern slopes rise more precipitously from the water. The sea was the highway for considerable traffic between Damascus and the Mediterranean, and the customhouse duties from which Christ took Matthew brought huge revenue. Hot springs along the western shore, especially at Tiberias, brought multitudes to be cured. The high hills surrounding the below sea-level water combined with abrupt temperature changes contributed to sudden and violent storms on the lake, as various NT passages indicate (Mark 4:35-41; 6:45-52; John 6:16-21).

It was on or around this lake that Jesus did many of His wonderful miracles. 18 of the 33 recorded miracles of Christ were probably done in the immediate neighbourhood of the Sea of Galilee. In the city of Capernaum alone He performed 10 of these.

Matt. 4:18; 15:29; Mark 1:16; 7:31; John 6:1

Chapter 7

7.The prophecy of the Spirit's advent

Verses 1-13. Jesus delays to go to Jerusalem

Verses 14-36. Jesus at the feast

Verses 37-39. The prophecy concerning the Holy Spirit

Verses 40-53. The people's confusion

Verses 1-53

1. My Time is not Yet Come. (John 7:1-9.)

2. *Departure from Galilee; Sought by the Jews.* (John 7:10-13.)
3. *In the Temple Teaching.* (John 7:14-29.)
4. *Opposition to Him.* (John 7:30-36.)
5. *The Indwelling Spirit Promised.* (John 7:37-39.)
6. *The Division Among the People Because of Him.* (John 7:40-44.)
7. *The Returning Officers and the Defense of Nicodemus.* (John 7:45-53.)

The Lord tarried in Galilee. How He must have sought souls there as He walked in Galilee! He would not walk in Judea (not “Jewry,” as in the Authorized Version) because the Jews, that is the leaders of the people, sought to kill Him. The Feast of Tabernacles was at hand and what we find written in this chapter happened during that Feast. His brethren, no doubt sons born to Mary after His own birth, urged Him to go to Judea. Their motives were selfish. They did not believe on Him. However, later they believed, for we find them among those who waited in Jerusalem for the promise of the father. (Acts 1:14.) The Feast of Tabernacles typifies the millennial blessings for Israel and the Gentiles, the great consummation. The world hated Him and He declared that His time had not yet come. We cannot follow at length the interesting account of His coming to Jerusalem, the words He spake, the answers He gave to those who hated Him. He taught and they marvelled. He declared that the doctrine He preached was of Him that sent Him. What a challenge He gave them! “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” Then He told them that they tried to kill Him. “Thou hast a demon,” was their reply, while others said: “Is not this He whom they seek to kill?” They sought to take Him and the Pharisees and Chief Priest sent officers to arrest Him. Thus the hatred against Him is manifested. His hour had not yet come; no one could touch Him. When the hour came He yielded Himself. The great center of this chapter is found in John 7:37-39. The last day of the Feast of Tabernacles was the greatest. It was the eighth day, a day of rest and holy gathering together. During the seven days of the feast water was daily drawn from the pool of Siloam and then poured out. On the last day this ceremony did not take place. The seven days typified their wilderness journey; the eighth day the entrance into the land. For seven days they drew the water and poured it out, commemorating the water the Lord had supplied to Israel during the wilderness journey. On the eighth day they enjoyed the springs of the land itself an emblem of the living waters which the Lord had promised to His people. Israel has these promises. “And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from

Jerusalem.” (Zechariah 14:8.) The same promise we find elsewhere. (See Ezekiel 47:1-23; Isaiah 12:1-6.) And He Who had given to His people these promises, Who had come to fulfil them, stood in their midst. They hate Him. They tell Him to His face, “Thou hast a demon.” They seek to kill Him.

On the last day of the feast, typical of Israel’s promised blessing and glory, He stood and cried: “If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink.” He offers now upon the rejection of Himself something new to “any man who thirsts”; the national promises of living water pouring forth from Jerusalem cannot be fulfilled now. They will be fulfilled when He comes again. It is an individual invitation, an individual promise, He gives. “He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” We are then told that this means the gift of the Holy Spirit, which they were to receive who came to Him and believed on Him. The promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Then the Holy Spirit came to dwell in believers. The overflow, the streams of living water to flow from the believer, is the type of the Spirit, the Spirit of power manifesting Himself through the believer in bearing testimony for Christ. In the third chapter we saw the Holy Spirit communicating life; He is the Life-giving Spirit. In the fourth chapter the Lord spoke of the Spirit as the well of living water; He indwells the one who is born again to make communion and worship possible. Then followed His teaching in chapters 5 and 6, again concerning the life the believer hath in Him and how it is sustained. In the present chapter the indwelling Spirit, Who is the well of living water in the believer, is seen flowing forth to others, just as a spring will overflow.

Chapter 8

8.The adulterous woman; discourse on the light of the world

7:53-8:11. The woman taken in adultery

Verses 12-20, 21-30. Discourses on the light of the world and on faith

Verses 31-59. Discourse on spiritual freedom

Verses 1-59

1. The Woman Taken in Adultery. (John 8:1-11.)

2. The Light of the World. (John 8:12.)

3. His Testimony Concerning Himself and the Father. (John 8:13-20.)

4. *His Solemn Declarations.* (John 8:21-47.)

5. *Before Abraham Was, I Am.* (John 8:48-59.)

The first verse belongs to the preceding chapter. The officers returned without Him, bearing their testimony that “never man spake like this man.” Nicodemus ventured his timid defence. Then every man went to his own house while the Lord went to the Mount of Olives.

The story of the woman taken in adultery has been rejected by many leading scholars. It is claimed that it is nothing less than a forgery. The chief arguments against it are the following: That the story is missing in some of the oldest manuscripts and earlier translations; that some of the Greek Fathers never refer to it; that it differs in style from the rest of the Gospel of John, and that the incident ought to be discredited on moral ground. However all these arguments have been proven invalid. Many old manuscripts have the story as well as some of the oldest translations. Others of the so-called church-fathers speak of it. There can be no question whatever of its genuineness. It was omitted on purpose in certain manuscripts. The Grace, which shines forth so marvelously in the Lord’s dealing with the woman, was unpalatable to teachers who mixed Law and Grace. They left it out for a purpose. [“The argument from alleged discrepancies between the style and language of this passage, and the usual style of St. John’s writing, is one which should be received with much caution. We are not dealing with an uninspired but with an inspired writer. Surely it is not too much to say that an inspired writer may occasionally use words and constructions and modes of expression which he generally does not use, and that it is no proof that he did not write a passage because he wrote it in a peculiar way.”]

It was a clever scheme from the side of the Scribes and Pharisees to tempt Him. The Law of Moses demanded her death by stoning. If He gave as an answer, “let her be stoned!” He would contradict His own testimony that He came not to judge, but to save. If He declared that the guilty woman was not to be stoned, then would He break the law. They appealed to Him as teacher, not as judge. He was silent and stooped down and wrote with His finger in the ground. (The words, “as though He heard them not” are in italics and must be omitted.) It is the only time we read of our Lord that He wrote. The finger which wrote in the ground was the same which had written the law in the tables of stone. What He wrote we do not know; but it was symbolical of the fact that the law against man is written in the dust, the dust of death. Not alone had the woman deserved death, but all were equally guilty. After His demand, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,” the oldest in the company left first

till the Lord was alone with the guilty woman. He did not set aside the law, and yet He manifested His marvellous Grace. The self-righteous accusers were condemned and sneaked into darkness, away from Him Who is the Light. The woman addressed Him as Lord, showing she believed on Him; and He told her to go and sin no more. The Grace He shows demands holiness.

The scene occurred in the Temple and the words He spoke following this incident were likewise spoken there. A great testimony again follows, which He gives concerning Himself. He is the Light of the world; it is not confined to Israel, but the light is to reach the Gentile nations. This is revealed in the Prophet Isaiah. After Messiah's complaint, "I have laboured in vain," the rejected One is to be the light to the Gentiles. "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 59:1-6.) Then follows an individual promise. He that followeth Him walks not in darkness, but has the light of life. In Him is life as well as light; there is then fellowship with God for the child of life, fellowship one with another if we walk in the light. He then bore additional testimony concerning Himself. He knew where He came from and whither He went. The blind Pharisees did not. And when He spoke of the fellowship of Himself and the Father, they asked, "Where is thy Father?" They were blind and blinded, and knew neither Him nor the Father.

Very solemn are the declarations in John 8:21-29. They are as solemn and as true today as when they were uttered by the lips of the Son of God. "I said therefore unto you that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Rejecting Christ, not believing on Him, means to die in sin. When they ask Him again, "Who art thou?" He answered, "Absolutely what I am also speaking to you." [The rendering of the Authorized Version is incorrect.] He is the Word, the Truth, the Life, the Light. He is, in the principle of His being, what also He speaks. Essentially, precisely, what He is, He also speaks. The phrase "lifting up" means His crucifixion. (See 3:14 and 12:32.) After that event His vindication would come. He is the "I am." Many believed on Him. Were they true believers or the same class as we find at the close of the second chapter? Most likely they misunderstood His statement of being lifted up. They may have thought of Him becoming King; they certainly knew nothing of the Cross.

More teaching follows. To be a true disciple means to abide in His Word. By the Word and the Spirit we are begotten, and to live as a disciple needs abiding in His Word. The Son is the Deliverer Who makes free from the power of Satan and of Sin, of which He bears witness.

This interesting chapter ends with a startling self-revelation of His absolute Deity, that He is the Eternal Jehovah. Eleven times the name “Abraham” is found in the eighth chapter of John. At the close the Lord speaks of Abraham having seen His day and rejoiced. He saw it in faith. Then when the Jews expressed their astonishment He answered, “Before Abraham was, I AM!” It is the most positive, the clearest declaration of our Lord of His Eternity, that He is God. He is the “I AM”--Jehovah. Thus this great testimony has always been received. We let a few of the ancient teachers speak:

Chrysostom observes: “He said not before Abraham was, I was, but, I AM. As the Father useth this expression I AM, so also doth Christ, for it signifieth continuous being, irrespective of all time. On which account the expression seemed to the Jews blasphemous.”

Augustine says: “In these words acknowledge the Creator and discern the creature. He that spake was made the Seed of Abraham; and that Abraham might be, He was before Abraham.”

Gregory remarks: “Divinity has no past or future, but always the present; and therefore Jesus does not say before Abraham was I was, but I am.”

The Unitarians try to explain this away by saying, “Jesus only meant that He existed as Messiah in God’s counsels before Abraham.” Astonishing! How do they know what He meant? It is a satanic invention. The Jews knew better. They understood what He meant. They took up stones to stone Him because they knew He claimed absolute Deity. A miracle followed. The Greek means literally “He was hid.” Their eyes must have been holden as He went out of the Temple and passed by.

Chapter 9

9.The blind man healed

Verses 1-34. The blind man restored to sight

Verses 35-41. Jesus reveals Himself to the man

Verses 1-41

1. The Man Born Blind, Healed. (John 9:1-7.)

2. The Healed Man Questioned. (John 9:8-26.)

3. Reviled and Cast Out. (John 9:27-34.)

4. Jesus Reveals Himself to Him. (John 9:35-41.)

The healing of the man born blind is a type and an illustration of how Christ, the Light, communicates light and how he who follows the Light walks no more in darkness, but has the light of life. (John 8:12.) And before He healed the man He testified that His day of activity on earth as Man was rapidly drawing to its close. (John 9:4-5.) The clay and the spittle did not effect the opening of the eyes; it was the power of Christ. The blind man went and washed in the pool of Siloam and came seeing.

The conflict the blind man had is interesting and instructive, but too lengthy to follow in our annotations. The Pharisees exhibit their hatred against Him Who healed the blind man and they did all in their power to discredit the miracle and Him Who performed it. They questioned the man to confound him, but did not succeed. Then they questioned the parents, but they were afraid to say how their son had received his sight, for the Jews had agreed that if any man confessed Him as Christ he should be put out of the synagogue. Then they questioned the man again and he gave them an excellent testimony. "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." And when after repeated questionings the healed one expressed his firm belief that He Who gave him sight was of God, they cast him out.

But they only cast him into the arms of the loving Lord. He heard of what had been done to the man, and He sought for him. Then He revealed Himself to him as the Son of God. The man believed and worshipped Him. He was thrust outside of Judaism and in that outside place Christ found him, and he believed on Christ. Like everything else in the Gospel of John this anticipates the position of true Christianity. It is outside of the camp of Judaism, outside of that which has rejected Christ. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." (Hebrews 13:13.)



Archaeological light: The Pool of Siloam seen from above

John 5:1-15 records how Jesus healed an invalid by the Pool of Bethesda. John provides the detail that the pool had five porticoes. For a long time people cites this as an example of John being inaccurate, because no such place had been found. But more recently the Pool of Bethesda has been excavated – it lies maybe forty feet below ground – and sure enough, there were five porticoes, which means colonnaded porches or walkways, exactly as John had described. And you have other discoveries – the Pool of Siloam from John 9:7, Jacob’s Well from John 4:12, the probable location of the Stone Pavement near the Jaffa Gate where Jesus appeared before Pilate in John 19:13, even Pilate’s own identity – all of which have lent historical credibility to the John’s gospel.” (Strobel 132-33)

Chapter 10

10. Discourse on the good shepherd

Verses 1-21. The discourse itself

Verses 22-39. Discourse on the unity of the Godhead

Verses 40-41. Jesus at the place where John had baptized

Verses 1-42

1. The Shepherd of the Sheep. (John 10:1-5.)

2. The Good Shepherd, His Sheep and His Work. (John 10:6-21.)

3. At the Feast of Dedication; the Repeated Testimony. (John 10:22-30.)

4. Accused of Blasphemy and His Answer. (John 10:31-39.)

5. Beyond Jordan; and Many Believed on Him. (John 10:40-42.)

The teaching of this chapter is closely linked with the preceding event. It has become evident that the true sheep of Christ, belonging to His flock, would be cast out of the Jewish fold. The healed man cast out had become one of His sheep. Therefore He teaches now more fully concerning Himself as the Shepherd and about His sheep. The Old Testament speaks often of Israel as the sheep of Jehovah, and of Jehovah as the Shepherd. (Psalms 80:1; Psalms 95:7; Psalms 23:1; Ezekiel 34:1-31; Zechariah 11:7-9; Zechariah 13:7.) The true Shepherd had come through the appointed door into the sheep fold, that is among Israel. He is the only One, and the porter (the Holy Spirit) opened to Him. He came and called His own sheep by name to lead them out. And the sheep hear His voice and follow Him. All is Jewish. He came the true Shepherd, into the sheepfold to lead them out to become His flock. It was a parable He spoke in these opening verses, but they did not understand it. What follows is a fuller revelation of Himself as the good Shepherd, and the sheep who belong to His flock. Judaism was a fold out of which the Shepherd leads His flock. He is the Door of the sheep. He is the means of getting into the flock, as a door is the means of getting into a house. Through Him all His sheep must enter by faith into the flock. There is no other door and no other way. He came into the fold by God's appointed way and He is God's appointed way. "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." A most blessed promise. He is the door. Any man, it does not matter who it is, any

man may enter in by Him and then having entered in by Him, that is believed on Him, He promises salvation, liberty and food. These three things are bestowed upon all who believe on Him. Salvation is in Him and it is a present and a perfect salvation; liberty, freed from the bondage of the law which condemned the sinner, a perfect liberty; pasture, food, which He supplies; He Himself is the food, a perfect food. It is all found outside of the fold, the fold of Judaism, and in Christ. He came that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. The abundant life He speaks of here is the life which comes from His death and resurrection. The good Shepherd had to give His life for the sheep. How different from the hireling, who fleeth and careth not for the sheep. The hirelings were the faithless shepherds. (Ezekiel 34:1-6.) Again He said: "I lay down my life for the sheep."

"The expression, 'laying down the soul or life' for any one, does not occur anywhere else independently in the New Testament. It is never found in profane writers. It must be referred back to the Old Testament, and specially to Isaiah 53:10, where it is said of Messiah, 'He shall make, or place, His soul an offering for sin.'"--Hengstenberg

In John 10:16 our Lord speaks of other sheep, which are not of this fold. These are the Gentiles. He leads out first from the Jewish fold His sheep; then there are the other sheep whom He will bring and who will hear His voice. The result will be one flock and one Shepherd. The Authorized Version is incorrect in using the word "fold." Judaism was a fold, the church is not. The ecclesiastical folds in which Christendom is divided have been brought about by the Judaizing of the church. The fold no longer exists. There is one flock as there is one Shepherd; one body, as there is one Lord. All who have heard His voice, believed on Him, entered in by Him, are members of the one flock.

At the Feast of Dedication, commemorating the cleansing of the Temple and rededication by Judas Maccabaeus after the desecration by Antiochus, (See Daniel 8:9-14) the Lord continued His blessed teaching, ending it once more with a great revelation of Himself. He makes a most blessed addition to His previous instructions concerning Himself and His sheep. "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Here we have the comforting assurance of the absolute security of every sheep of Christ. Eternal life is a present and personal possession, not something which comes after death. It is therefore an abiding possession and cannot be lost. Then He Who is the Life and the Light, the Way and the Truth, assures us that His sheep shall never perish. Some say that He said "no one can pluck them out of His hand" but we can do it

ourselves by living in sin, etc. This is fully answered by the correct rendering of His words, “they shall never perish.” It means literally: “they shall in no wise ever perish.” This is absolute; it covers everything.

Then His great revelation: “I and the Father are one.” Again the Jews understood what He meant, for they wanted to stone Him. After His answer they wanted to take Him, but He escaped out of their hands. His hour had not yet come.



Lazarus' Tomb in Bethany

Chapter 11

11. The raising of Lazarus

Verses 1-44. The Son's power over death

Verses 45-57. The effect of this climatic sign

Verses 1-57

1. *The Sickness of Lazarus Announced.* (John 11:1-4.)
2. *The Delayed Departure and the Death of Lazarus.* (John 11:5-16.)
3. *The Arrival at Bethany.* (John 11:17-27.)
4. *Weeping with Them That Weep.* (John 11:28-38.)
5. *The Resurrection of Lazarus.* (John 11:39-46.)
6. *The Prophecy of Caiaphas.* (John 11:47-52.)
7. *Seeking to Kill Him.* (John 11:53-57.)

The resurrection of Lazarus is the final great sign or miracle in this Gospel. It is the greatest Of all. Some critics have discredited it by saying that, if it had really taken place the Synoptics would have something to say about it. The Gospel of John is the Gospel in which this miracle properly belongs. As we have seen, the Gospel of John is the Gospel in which our Lord as Son of God is fully revealed. The resurrection of Lazarus proves Him the Son Of God, Who can raise the dead. The philosopher and skeptic Spinoza declared that if he could be persuaded of the historicity of this miracle he would embrace Christianity. The miracle is supported by the most incontrovertible evidence; it requires more credulity to deny it than to believe it.

A German Expositor (Dr. Tillman) put together the evidences of this great miracle in the following way:

“The whole story is of a nature calculated to exclude all suspicion of imposture, and to confirm the truth of the miracle. A well-known Person of Bethany, named Lazarus, falls sick in the absence of Jesus. His sisters send a message to Jesus, announcing it; but while He is yet absent Lazarus dies, is buried, and kept in the tomb for four days, during which Jesus is still absent. Martha, Mary, and all his friends are convinced of his death. Our Lord, while yet remaining in the place where He had been staying, tells His disciples in plain terms that He means to go to Bethany, to raise Lazarus from the dead, that the glory of God may be illustrated, and their faith confirmed. At our Lord’s approach, Martha goes to meet Him, and announces her brother’s death, laments the absence of Jesus before the event took place, and yet expresses a faint hope that by some means Jesus might yet render help. Our Lord declares that her brother shall be raised again, and assures her that He has the power of granting life to the dead. Mary approaches, accompanied by weeping friends from Jerusalem. Our Lord Himself is moved, and weeps, and goes to the sepulchre, attended by a crowd. The stone

is removed. The stench of the corpse is perceived. Our Lord, after pouring forth audible prayer to His Father, calls forth Lazarus from the grave, in the hearing of all. The dead man obeys the call, comes forth to public view in the same dress that he was buried in, alive and well, and returns home without assistance. All persons present agree that Lazarus is raised to life, and that a great miracle has been worked, though not all believe the person who worked it to be the Messiah. Some go away and tell the rulers at Jerusalem what Jesus has done. Even these do not doubt the truth of the fact; on the contrary, they confess that our Lord by His works is becoming every day more famous, and that He would probably be soon received as Messiah by the whole nation. And therefore the rulers at once take counsel how they may put to death both Jesus and Lazarus. The people, in the meantime hearing of this prodigious transaction, flock in multitudes to Bethany, partly to see Jesus, and partly to view Lazarus. And the consequence is that by and by, when our Lord comes to Jerusalem, the population goes forth in crowds to meet Him and show Him honor, and chiefly because of His work at Bethany. Now, if all these circumstances do not establish the truth of the miracle, there is no truth in history.”

To follow the historical account in all its details would take many pages. It reveals the glory, the sympathy and the power of our Lord as perhaps no other Scripture does.

The heart of the chapter is found in His words to Martha: “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.” (John 11:25-26.) In the first place these words anticipate His death and resurrection. He Who laid down His life and took it again, is the resurrection, and the life. He can raise the dead, the spiritually and physically dead. But these words take us also forward to His coming again, when they will find their great fulfilment, and when the crowning proof is given that He is the resurrection and the life. The Saints, who believed on Him and died in Christ, will be raised first. This truth is expressed in His words: “He that believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live.” And all who live when He comes for His Saints, when His shout opens the graves, will be caught up in clouds, changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, passing into His presence without dying. Of this He speaks in His last statement: “He that liveth (when He comes) and believeth on Me shall never die.” (1 Corinthians 15:51; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.) Who is able to describe the scene as He goes to the cave where His friend Lazarus had been laid away four days previous! Mary sank weeping at His feet. When He saw her weeping, the Jews weeping, then He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. Jesus wept! Oh, precious words! Conscious of His Deity and of His power, He enters with deepest sympathy into the sorrows and afflictions of His people. Such He is still,

our great High-priest, Who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. The cave was covered with a stone. When He commands that stone to be removed, Martha interrupted Him by saying, "By this time he stinketh, for he has been dead four days." It was unbelief. After He had lifted His eyes to heaven and had spoken to the Father, He uttered His majestic "Lazarus, come forth!" It was the word of omnipotence to manifest now fully that He is the Son of God, Who hath the power to raise the dead. Who can describe the solemn moment and what happened immediately! Perhaps there was a faint echo out of the cave, for He had cried His command with a loud voice. All eyes were looking towards the dark entrance of the cave, when lo, the dead man was seen struggling forward, bound by the grave clothes. Lazarus, who had been dead four days, whose body had already entered into decomposition, came forth a living man.

"A more plain, distinct, and unmistakable miracle it would be impossible for man to imagine. That a dead man should hear a voice, obey it, rise up, and move forth from his grave alive is utterly contrary to nature. God alone could cause such a thing. What first began life in him, how lungs and heart began to act again, suddenly and instantaneously, it would be waste of time to speculate. It was a miracle and there we must leave it"--C. Ryle.

"He came back, a challenge thrown in the face of Christ's would-be murderers, of the possibility of success against One to Whom death and grave are subject"--Numerical Bible.

A second word He spoke: "Loose him and let him go." Lazarus is the type of a sinner who hears His Word. We are dead in trespasses and sins. Spiritually man is in the grave, in death and in darkness. He is in corruption. The Lord of Life gives life. And besides this He gives with that life-- liberty. He looses from the bondage of the law and of sin. In the next chapter we read of Lazarus again. He is in fellowship with the Lord Who raised him from the dead. Life, Liberty and Fellowship are the three blessed things which he receives who hears and believes. Compare this great chapter with the teachings of the fifth chapter. And Lazarus is also a fit type of Israel and her coming national resurrection.

Then many believed on Him, while the Pharisees and chief priests, acknowledging the fact that He did many miracles, plan His death. Remarkable is the prophecy of Caiaphas. He was used as an instrument to utter a great truth. Christ was indeed to die for that nation, and also that He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

Chapter 12

12. Supper at Bethany; acclaim at Jerusalem

Verses 1-11. The anointing by Mary

Verses 12-19. The triumphal entry

Verses 20-36. Discourse on the world's redeemer

Verses 37-50. Jesus' final words

Verses 1-50

1. The Feast at Bethany. (John 12:1-8.)
2. The Entrance into Jerusalem. (John 12:9-19.)
3. The Inquiring Greeks and His Answer. (John 12:20-33.)
4. His Final Words. (John 12:34-50.)

From the close of the previous chapter we learn that the Lord had gone with His disciples to a city called Ephraim. Six days before the Passover He came to Bethany again. They made Him a feast. Lazarus is especially mentioned as well as Martha, who served; Mary also was present with others who were of His disciples. It is a beautiful type of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, when He will have His own with Him. Lazarus represents the Saints risen from the dead, the others represent the Saints who never died, but are changed in a moment. Service is represented in Martha. Fellowship they had together in the feast with the Lord, and worship in Mary, who anointed His feet. The Synoptics record the fact that she also anointed His head; she did both and there is no discrepancy. She was deeply attached to Him and knew of the threatening danger which hung over Him as Man. She did not know the full meaning of her beautiful act, but the Lord knew and said: "Against the day of my burying hath she kept this." And how He appreciated her love and devotion, though she had not the full intelligence of all it meant. It is devotion to Himself our Lord appreciates most in His people. Well has it been said, "She learned at His feet what she poured out there."

A large number of Jews came to Bethany to see Him, while others came out of curiosity to see Lazarus. Then the wicked chief priests held a consultation that they might put Lazarus also to death. We do not hear another word about Lazarus after this.

His triumphant entrance into Jerusalem followed. The account of it in John's Gospel is very brief. The people welcome Him with the Messianic welcome, "Hosanna! (Save now.) Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." That shout will be heard again in Jerusalem and then it will not be followed by the awful cry, "Crucify Him!" When He comes in power and glory as Israel's King the believing remnant of His people will welcome Him by the same word. (See Matthew 23:39.) Zechariah's prophecy (Zechariah 9:9) is quoted in part, and that which was unfulfilled is omitted. But the disciples did not understand it, nor did they know that they were fulfilling prophecy. Only after "Jesus was glorified" (John 12:16) did they remember these things. The resurrection of Lazarus played an important part in His triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. Those who stood by and saw the miracle done, bore witness, and others met Him because they heard of the miracle. The testimony of His enemies was: "Behold the world is gone after Him."

Then Greeks (Gentiles) inquired after Him, "Sir, we would see Jesus." How great was His triumph! There was no answer to those Greeks. Before the Gentiles could come to Him, He would have to die. The hour then had come when He, the Son of Man, should be glorified. He meant the Cross and that which follows the suffering, His resurrection and ascension. By His death as Son of Man He acquired Glory and receives ultimately the Kingdoms of this world, the nations and the uttermost parts of the earth for His inheritance. He, therefore, speaks of Himself as the grain of wheat. If there is to be fruit from the one grain of wheat it must fall in to the ground and die. The grain of wheat has life in itself and when it is put into the ground that life is carried through death, to be reproduced in the many grains of wheat. The Life had to pass through death so that it might be communicated to others. The fruit springs from His death and resurrection. What a wonderful sacrifice He brought in giving His life! Believers possess the life of the grain of wheat, which passed through death and therefore are to follow Him and manifest it in a practical way. That is why He adds: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor." Giving up, self-denial, the path He went is our path. But how glorious the promised reward!

Then He looked forward to the Cross and His soul was troubled. "Father, save Me from this hour!" This was His prayer, much like that in Gethsemane. But He also adds at once, "for this cause came I unto this hour." He had come to die. The next request, "Father, glorify Thy Name," is at once answered by the voice from heaven. The Father's Name had been glorified by the Son, in a special manner the Father's Name was glorified in the resurrection of Lazarus. The

glorification in the future, “and will glorify it,” took place “when Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father.” (Romans 6:4.)

The chapter closes with the final words of our Lord to the people. Many of the chief-rulers believed on Him without making an open confession. The last words He speaks before He gathers His own around Himself are concerning the Father Who sent Him.

John and Isaiah		
Subject	Isaiah	John
The shepherd and the sheep	40:11	10:1-21
Water for the thirsty	41:18;44:3;48:21;49:10;55:1	4:13-14;6:35;7:37
Food for the hungry	49:10	6:35
Guidance	42:16; 48:17	14:6
The divine Comforter	51:12	14:16
The gift of the Spirit	59:21	14:26;15:26;16:13
Worldwide salvation	43:19;45:22;49:12;56:7-8;60:3	4:21-24; 10:16
Freedom from fear	41:10;51:7	14:1
Sight for the blind	35:5; 42:7	9:39
Liberty for the bound	61:1	8:36
Divine teaching	50:4-5	14:10;17:6-8

Chapter 13

13. Washing the disciples' feet

Verses 1-20. The meaning of the Lord's action

Verses 21-35. Prophecy of the betrayal by Judas

Verses 36-38. Prophecy of Peter's denial

Verses 1-38

1. The Washing of the Disciples' Feet. (John 13:1-11.)

2. Instructions given; to Wash One Another's Feet. (John 13:12-17.)

3. The Betrayal Foretold. (John 13:18-30.)

4. His Own Departure and the New Commandment. (John 13:31-35.)

5. The Denial of Peter Foretold. (John 13:36-38.)

We reach with this chapter the most precious portion of this Gospel. The multitudes are left behind. Israel has completely rejected Him and now He gathered His own beloved disciples around Himself and gave them the sweet and blessed words of instruction, of comfort and cheer, His farewell. A little while and He would leave them to return to the Glory from which He came. "He is leaving upon earth the chosen companions of His path; those indeed that have hardly ever understood Him,--whose lack of sympathy has been itself one of the bitterest trials, of those that made Him the 'Man of Sorrows' that He was. Yet they are his hard-won spoils from the hand of the enemy,--the firstfruits of the spiritual harvest coming in. They are His own, the gift of His Father, the work of His Spirit, the purchase of His blood, by and by to tell out, and, for the ages to come, divine love and power to all His intelligent creation. Nor, spite of their feebleness, can He forget how their hearts awakened by His call, have clung to Him in the scene of His rejection, how they have left their little all to follow Him. Now He is going to leave them in that world whose enmity they must for His sake incur, and in which they would fill up that which was behind of His afflictions for His body's sake, which is the Church (Colossians 1:24). In human tenderness His heart overflows towards them, while in divine fullness; and this is what we find before us now. It is peculiar to John, and furnishes them for the way, and arms them for the impending conflict."--F.W. Grant.

Our brief annotations are not sufficient to cover all the blessed teachings of these chapters. What a great assurance is given in the first verse of this chapter! He knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world. He knew because He is the Son of God. Then follows the assurance of His love for His own; even unto the end. His love knows no change. His tender, loving words addressed to His own in these chapters fully manifest that love which passeth knowledge.

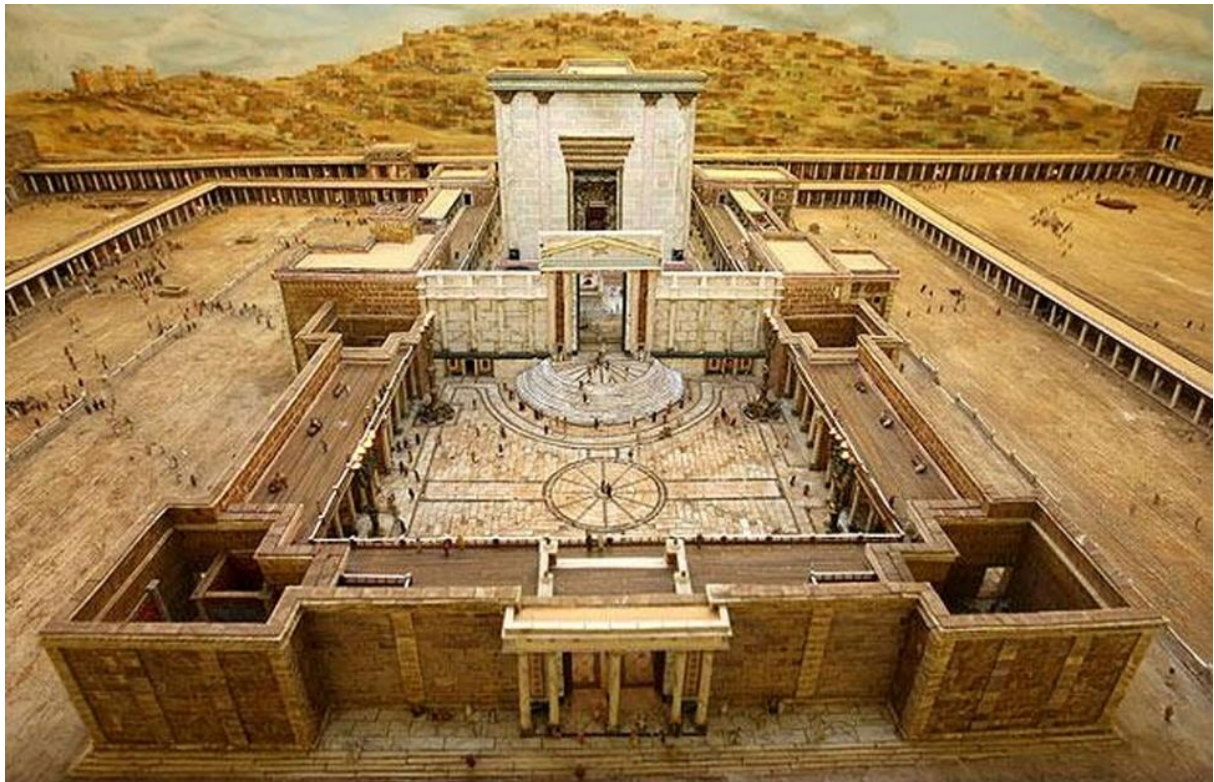
The washing of the disciples' feet was a great symbolical action to teach His own the gracious provision made for them during His absence. Some well meaning Christians have applied the words of our Lord, "ye also ought to wash one another's feet," in a literal way, and teach that the Lord meant this to be done literally. The words of our Lord to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7), show that underneath the outward action of the Lord in washing the disciples' feet there is a deeper spiritual meaning. We see Him girded, with a basin of water in His blessed hands, to wash the disciples' feet. The water explains the spiritual meaning. We have seen that the water in the third chapter is the type of the Word of God. It has the same meaning in this chapter. Peter first refused to have his feet washed; then when the Lord had said unto him, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me," he asked Him to wash his hands and his head as well. "Jesus saith to him, He that hath been bathed * needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all." (John 13:10 contains two different words for washing; the one is "bathed" and the other "wash." This difference is not made in the Authorized Version.) When the Lord spoke of His disciples being bathed and clean every whit, He had reference to the new birth by the water and the Spirit. They were all bathed, born again, except Judas, whom the Lord meant when He said "but not all." Titus 3:5 reads, literally translated: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the bath of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." This great work is done once for all and cannot be repeated, just as the natural birth cannot be repeated with the same individual.

The Lord washed the disciples' feet, not their hands. Hands are for work and the feet for walking. His action has a meaning in connection with our walk in the world. We contract defilement as we pass on through this world. And defilement severs communion with the Lord. We need therefore cleansing. All disciples need it. This He has graciously provided, and the washing of the disciples' feet typifies that needed cleansing. He uses His Word to bring this about. This is "the washing of water by the Word." He is the Advocate with the Father to restore us to fellowship. We must come to Him with our failures, our stumbling, imperfect walk, our defilement, and place ourselves into His hands as the disciples placed their soiled feet in His loving hands. His own perfect light will then search our

innermost beings and bring to light what has defiled us, so that, after cleansing, we can enjoy His fellowship and have part with Him. This necessitates confession and self-judgment from our side. If this blessed truth is not realized and enjoyed in faith, if we do not come to Him for this service of love, we are at a distance from Him.

And we are also to walk in the same spirit of serving and wash one another's feet. As He lovingly deals with us, so we are to deal with one another. The one that is overtaken in a fault is to be restored by him that is spiritual in the spirit of meekness. "He that would cleanse another's feet must be at his feet to cleanse them." How little of all this in a practical way is known among God's people.

The betrayal by Judas is announced, and he goes into the night. The Lord announces also His imminent departure and gives them the new commandment "love one another." The chapter closes with the prediction of Peter's denial.



Archaeological light: Herod's Temple

A retired farmer has spent more than 30 years building an enormous scale model of a Biblical temple. Alec Garrard, 78, has dedicated a massive 33,000 hours to constructing the ancient Herod's Temple, which measures a whopping 20ft by 12ft.

The pensioner has hand-baked and painted every clay brick and tile and even

sculpted 4,000 tiny human figures to populate the courtyards.

Historical experts believe the model is the best representation in the world of what the Jewish temple actually looked like and it has attracted thousands of visitors from all over the globe.

But Mr Garrard, who started the elaborate project in his 40's, says his masterpiece will not be finished in his lifetime.

"I've always loved making models and as I was getting older I started to think about making one big project which would see me through to the end of my life," he said.

"I have an interest in buildings and religion so I thought maybe I could combine the two and I came up with the idea of doing the Temple .

"I'd seen one or two examples of it in Biblical exhibitions, but I thought they were rubbish and I knew I could do better.

"I have been working on it for decades but it will never be finished as I'm always finding something new to add."

Mr Garrard, from Norfolk , spent more than three years researching the Temple which was destroyed by the Romans 2000 years ago and deemed to be one of the most remarkable buildings of ancient times.

He then started to construct the amazing 1:100 scale model, which is now housed in a huge building in his back garden. "Everything is made by hand. I cut plywood frames for the walls and buildings and all the clay bricks and tiles were baked in the oven then stuck together," he said. Mr Garrard sculpted and painted 4,000 figures, measuring just half an inch and all wearing their correct costumes including 32 versions of Jesus.

Chapter 14

14. The Second Advent and the Spirit's coming

Verses 1-6. Christ's return for His own

Verses 7-15. Christ expounds His deity

Verses 16-26. The promise of the Spirit

Verses 27-31. The bequest of peace. Cf. Phil 4:7.

Verses 1-31

1. Let not Your Heart be Troubled! (John 14:1-7.)
2. I Am in the Father and the Father in Me. (John 14:8-14.)
3. The Other Comforter Promised. (John 14:15-27.)
4. I Go unto the Father. (John 14:28-31.)

There is no break between these two chapters. The Lord continues His discourse to the eleven disciples. "Let not your heart be troubled!" What precious words of comfort! How many hearts have been soothed by them and how many tears they have dried! And after His loving words He said again: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27.) He speaks first of all of the Father's house with its many abodes. The Father's house is no longer the temple, but the blessed home where the loving Father dwells and to which the Son of God was about to return in the form of man, after His death and resurrection. And the Father's house with its many abodes belongs to all who belong to Him; and all who are His, whom He is not ashamed to call brethren (John 20:17; Hebrews 2:11 and Psalms 22:22) belong to the Father's house. He has gone there to prepare a place. The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before Israel to search out a resting place for them (Numbers 11:33) and so He has gone before as our forerunner. What it all means "to prepare a place for you" we cannot fully know, but we know that His great work has removed every barrier for all who believe on Him, and in God's own time the full redemption of the purchased possession by the power of God will be accomplished. (Ephesians 1:14.) Then His unfulfilled promise, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also," will be fulfilled. He did not mean the death of His disciples. The death of the believer is not the coming of Himself to the child of God, but when the believer dies he goes to be with Christ. "I will

come again” means His coming for those who belong to Him, His Saints. How He will redeem this gracious promise and lead His own into the blessed home, is not revealed here. But He gave it in the form of a special revelation to the Apostle of the Gentiles. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.) Thomas speaks first. He misunderstood the words of the Lord and was troubled with unbelief. Yet Thomas loved the Lord and was greatly attached to Him, as we learn from John 11:16. Blessed answer he received. “I am the way”;--He is the only way to God and to the Father’s house; “the Truth”;-- the revelation of the Father; and “the Life” as well.

His answer to Philip’s question shows that He was grieved. Yet how gentle the rebuke, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” It is another great witness of His oneness with the Father. “I am in the Father and the Father in me.” And His own belonging to Him, know the Father in Christ and are His. (Solemn truth it is: “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.” (1 John 2:23.) “And ye are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” (1 Corinthians 3:23.) John 14:12 has been a difficulty to many. What did our Lord mean when He said: “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father”? Christian Scientists and extreme faith-healers claim that He meant His actual works of healing and Christians should do now the same works and even greater works. But how could a believer do a greater work than the raising of Lazarus from the dead? The promise “the works that I do shall he do also” was fulfilled immediately after the day of Pentecost. The sick were healed by Peter’s shadow, the lame man was healed, demons were driven out, and the dead were raised. Were these miracles to continue to the end of the dispensation? There is nowhere a statement in Scripture that this should be the case. “If miracles were continually in the church, they would cease to be miracles. We never see them in the Bible except at some great crisis in the church’s history”--(Thoughts on the Gospel of John.) The “greater works” are spiritual works. The thousands saved in the beginning of the dispensation, the preaching of the Gospel far hence among the Gentiles and the gracious results, are these greater works.

The promise of Prayer in His name follows. This is something new. It is to be addressed to the Father and the Son, and He promises, “If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it.” So far He had spoken of Himself and the Father. God the Father had been revealed in the Son, and now He speaks of the other Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. He is promised to come, not to the world, but to His own as the other Comforter. (In Greek “Parakletos,” one who is alongside to help. The same word as in 1 John 2:1 “Advocate.”) He would come to abide in them, dwell with them and be in them. John 14:18, “I will come to you,” does

not mean His second coming as in John 14:3. It is Christ Himself in Spirit. The result of the coming and abiding of the Comforter is a blessed knowledge for the believer. “Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” Love to Him in the power of the Spirit must be expressed in obedience. Then there is the blessed legacy: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” It is not peace with God, but the peace of Himself which He has left us. And that peace will ever be enjoyed if we believe and obey His words.

Chapter 15

15. Union with Christ and fruit bearing

Verses 1-17. Abiding and fruit bearing

Verses 18-27. The believer and the world

Verses 1-27

1. The Vine and the Branch. (John 15:1-8.)
2. Communion with Him and its Conditions.(John 15:9-16.)
3. Love One Another! and the Hatred of the World. (John 15:17-27.)

Israel is called a vine in the Old Testament (Psalms 80:8; Isaiah 5:1-8; Jeremiah 2:21; Hosea 10:1) and Christ here in this parable takes the place of Israel and is the true vine. His disciples are the branches. Israel under the law covenant could not bear fruit for God, as the law cannot be the source of fruit-bearing. Fruit unto God can only spring from union with Christ. (See Romans 7:4.) He as the true vine on earth brought fruit unto God. The true believer is as closely united to Him as the branch is to the vine. The branch is in Him and He is in the branch. The life-sap of the vine circulates in the branch. And this life and nature in the believer produces the fruit. Our Lord said: “The Father who abideth in me, He doeth the works.” And believers should confess: The Lord Jesus Christ Who abideth in me and I in Him, He produces the fruit. Apart from Him we can do nothing. This vital union with Christ, dependence on Him, the result--fruit unto God, is more fully revealed in the Epistles.

He told His disciples, “now ye are clean (literally: purged) through the word that I have spoken unto you.” In Chapter 13 He said, “ye are clean, but not all.” Judas was then present, but he had gone out to betray Him. But what does it mean: “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away,” and again, “if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned”? These words are

often taken to teach that a believer's salvation and safety depends upon his fruit-bearing and his faithfulness. These two statements have been much perverted and misapplied as if they taught that a true branch in the vine, one who is really in Christ, may be cut off and be cast away to perish forever. If this were the meaning of these words our Lord would contradict His previous teachings. The branch in the vine which beareth not fruit is not a true believer at all, but one who by profession claims to be a branch in the vine. Note in John 15:6 the change from "ye" to "a man." If our Lord had said "if ye abide not in me, ye shall be cast forth as a branch, etc.," it would mean a true believer. But the change makes it clear that no true disciple is meant, but one who makes a profession without being born again.

"These are awful words. They seem, however, to apply specially to backsliders and apostates, like Judas Iscariot. There must be about a man some appearance of professed faith in Christ, before he can come to the state described here. Doubtless there are those who seem to depart from grace and to go back from union with Christ; but we need not doubt in such cases that the grace was not real, but seeming, and the union was not true, but fictitious. Once more we must remember that we are reading a parable.

After all, the final, miserable ruin and punishment of false professors, is the great lesson which the verse teaches. Abiding in Christ leads to fruitfulness in this life and everlasting happiness in the life to come. Departure from Christ leads to the everlasting fire of hell."--J.C. Ryle.

The secret of true fruit-bearing (the manifestation of the new nature in our life) is abiding in Christ and Christ in us. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk as He walked." The vine reproduces itself in the branch. And abiding in Christ means to walk in communion with Him and in utter dependence on Himself.

Then He declared: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love." Who is able to fathom the depths of these words! As the Father loved Him so He loveth us. Continue in my love means "abide in my love." "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love." A blessed and equally solemn contrast! When we walk in fellowship with Him, when we are obedient to Him, as He was obedient to His Father in His path down here, then we abide in His love. Obedience to His words proves our love to Him, and walking in obedience we abide in His love "and hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." (1 John 2:3.) Then He declares, "that my joy might remain in

you” and “that your joy might be full.” For the knowledge of His joy and the fullness of joy we need to walk in obedience.

Once more He mentions the new commandment (John 13:34) “love one another.” The Holy Spirit in the first Epistle of John enlarges upon this. In the world there is no love, but hatred. It hates the true believers, as the world hated Him. The true disciple must expect the same treatment which He receives in this world. “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” Israel is in view in John 15:24. They had seen and hated both Him and the Father.

Once more He announces the coming of the Paraclete, the Comforter. In Chapter 14 our Lord said, “I will pray the Father and He shall send you another Comforter.” Here He promises to send Him from the Father. He is to testify of Himself, witnessing to Him as glorified in the presence of the Father. They were to be witnesses of Him.

Chapter 16

16. The work of the promised Spirit

Verses 1-6. Disciples warned of suffering

Verses 7-11. Threefold work of the coming Spirit

Verses 12-15. Teaching ministry of the Spirit

Verses 16-33. Jesus predicts His death, resurrection and second coming

Verses 1-33

1. Persecutions Predicted. (John 16:1-6.)
2. The Comforter and His Demonstration. (John 16:7-15.)
3. Sorrow and joy. (John 16:16-22.)
4. The Father Himself Loveth You. (John 16:23-27.)
5. His Final Word before His Prayer. (John 16:28-33.)

Again He announced coming persecutions. The world is the same today as then, and before this age ends these predictions of our Lord will be again fulfilled, during the great tribulation.

The coming of the Comforter is once more announced by Him. He could not come unless the Lord departed. He is to be sent to His own and when He comes He will make a great demonstration to the world. The word “reprove” in John 16:8 is incorrect; the Greek word is difficult to express in its full meaning. Some have translated it by “rebuke,” others use the word “convince” or “convict.” The word “demonstrate” seems to be the nearest to the original. “And when He is come He will bring demonstration to the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment.” The presence of the Holy Spirit in believers is the proof to the world that the whole world is guilty of the death of Christ; the whole world is under sin and therefore not on probation but under condemnation. The Holy Spirit is also the demonstration to the world of righteousness. This does not mean that He brings righteousness to the world, or makes the world righteous, as so many erroneously believe. Our Lord adds: “Of righteousness, because I go to my Father and ye see me no more.” The Holy One was rejected by the world, cast out as an unrighteous One. But He, Who owned and satisfied God’s righteousness in dying as the substitute of sinners, is now exalted to the right hand of God; there He is the witness of righteousness. The presence of the Holy Spirit on earth demonstrates this fact. God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory; the world sees Him no more as a Saviour personally on earth; but will see Him again as Judge, when He comes to judge the world in righteousness. Righteousness is fully displayed in the glory, where He is. The hope of righteousness is to be with Him there. (Galatians 5:5.) The Holy Spirit also brings demonstration to the world of judgment “because the prince of this world is judged.” Sentence of judgment is pronounced against Satan, but not yet executed. He is the god of this age, but he was judged in His Cross. Judgment must come upon the world and its prince. The Holy Spirit now present upon the earth in the believers demonstrates this fact.

Many things He had to say unto His disciples, which they could not bear. The many things He mentioned were made known in due time by the Holy Spirit come down from heaven. Of this He speaks in the verses which follow. Note the seven things spoken of the Spirit of Truth: 1. He will guide you into all truth. 2. He shall not speak of Himself. 3. Whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak. 4. He will show you things to come. 5. He shall glorify Me. 6. He shall receive of Mine. 7. He shall show it unto you. This is the work He does now among and in the Saints. In all His work His gracious aim is to glorify Christ. When we glorify Christ, exalt Him, obey Him, follow Him and are devoted to Him, the Holy Spirit fills and uses us.

Then He spoke of the little while; the little while when they would see Him not; the little while, when they would see Him again. His final words before His great prayer are full of comfort and assurance. “Verily, verily, I say unto you,

Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you.”--”For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.” These are words precious to faith. Once more He speaks of His leaving the world to go back to the Father. But before that homegoing takes place they all were to be scattered and leave Him alone. He added: “Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” Our Lord was never forsaken by His Father; He was forsaken of God, the Holy God, when He stood in the sinner’s place.

The last utterance to His own is the assurance of peace in Him, the tribulation in the world, and the shout of victory: “Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.” And then His prayer.

Chapter 17

17. Christ’s great high priestly prayer

Verses 1-26. The seven petitions

Verses 1-26

- 1. The Finished Work. (John 17:1-5.)*
- 2. The Father’s Name and the Father’s Gift. (John 17:6-10.)*
- 3. Not of the World but Kept in it. (John 17:11-16.)*
- 4. Sanctification of Himself for His Own. (John 17:17-21.)*
- 5. The Glorification. (John 17:22-26.)*

His words were ended to the eleven disciples and next He spoke to the Father, and His disciples listened to all His blessed words. What moments these must have been! His words to the Father told them once more how he loved them, how He cared for them, what He had done and what He would do for them. Whenever we read this great Lord’s prayer we can still hear Him pray for His beloved people. What a glimpse it gives of His loving heart! The prayer is His high-priestly prayer. He is in anticipation on the other side of the cross. He knows the work is finished, atonement is made; He is back with the Father and has received the glory. This anticipation is seen in His words, “I have finished the work thou gavest me to do”; “and now I am no more in the world”;--”the glory thou hast given me I have given to them.” It is impossible to give an exposition of this great chapter. Blessed depths are here which we shall fathom

when we are with Him. All He taught concerning Himself and eternal life, what believers are and have in Him, He mentions in His prayer. All the great redemption truths more fully revealed in the New Testament Epistles may be traced in this high-priestly prayer of our Lord. We mention seven of these great truths as made known by Him in addressing the Father.

1. Salvation. He has power to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." He glorified the Father in His life and He finished the work He came to do on the Cross. There alone is redemption and salvation.

2. Manifestation. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." (John 17:6.) The Name of God, He, the Son, has made known to those who believe on Him is His Name as "Father." Such a name and relationship of the believer to God was not known in the Old Testament. The Son of God had to come from heaven's glory and declared the Father. After He gave His life and rose from the dead He spoke of "My Father and your Father." The Spirit of Sonship was given by Whom we cry: "Abba-Father."

3. Representation. He is our Priest and Advocate. He appears in the presence of God for us. "I pray for them; I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." (John 17:9.) Like the High Priest He carries only the names of His people upon His shoulders and upon His heart. He prays now for His church, His body, for every member. When the church is complete and the body is united to Himself in glory, He will pray for the world. "Ask of Me," the Father has told Him, "and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance." (Psalms 2:6.) When He asks this, He will receive the Kingdoms of this world. What comfort it should be to all His people to know He prays for us individually! His love and His power are for us.

4. Identification. We are one with Him, and all His Saints are one. The church is His body, an organism and not an organization. He did not pray for a unity in organization, but for a spiritual unity, which exists. "That they also may be one in us" is not an unanswered petition. The Spirit Who has come unites believers to Him and baptizes them into one body. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me"--this looks on towards the blessed consummation, when the Saints will appear with Christ in glory; then the world will know.

5. Preservation. He prayed for the keeping of His own. He commits them into His Father's hands. The believers' keeping for eternal life and glory rests not in

their own hands but in His hands. Judas is mentioned as the son of perdition; he was never born again.

6. Sanctification. (See John 17:17-19.) He is our Sanctification. In Him we are sanctified. We are sanctified by the Truth, by walking in obedience. Believers are constituted Saints in Christ and are called to walk in separation. The separating power is the Word and the Spirit.

7. Glorification. “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one as we are one” --”Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” This is His unanswered prayer. Some day it will be answered and all His Saints will be with Him and share His glory.

And oh! the wealth of Grace and Truth in His wonderful words we must pass by! May His own Spirit lead us deeper and fill our hearts with joy unspeakable and full of glory.



Archaeological light: Gordon's Calvary Garden and Tomb Jewish burial custom

Judaism has very specific customs and traditions when it comes to burying the dead. There are important guidelines and rules that must be adhered to in order

to uphold the Jewish faith. Death is hard for every family, so it is essential to understand Jewish customs and traditions in order to be respectful during this difficult time.

Jewish tradition states that the recently deceased should not be left unattended or alone. A "watchman" or Shomer is designated to stay with the deceased until the burial. It is important that the deceased be buried as soon as possible. Jewish custom believes that it is more respectful to prepare the body for burial immediately rather than delaying the services. However, there are always exceptions to rules. It could be up to the family to wait if family members live far away; this must be discussed with the rabbi.

Preparing the Body

It is not Jewish custom to view the body of the deceased. Do not expect to attend a service with an open casket. Tradition states that it is bad-mannered to stare at someone incapable of staring back. The only exception to this rule is if the family is asked to identify the body. Jewish custom also does not prefer embalming (unless local law requires it). Long ago, after the death family members gathered to ceremoniously prepare the body. The body was cleansed, anointed with oils and spices, and wrapped in a special linen cloth. Today, the funeral home provides contacts with the Cheyra Kadisha who are trained in preparing the body according to Jewish custom.

Oils

The anointing and preparing of the body requires a special blend of essential oils and spices. The common essential oils and spices used include sandalwood, myrrh, spikenard, frankincense, fir balsam, myrtle, pine, cypress and spruce with extra virgin olive oil. These oils have been used for hundreds of years for this primary purpose of preparing and purifying the dead.

Services

A Jewish funeral service lasts approximately half an hour. It includes a recitation of the Psalms, a eulogy and readings. Jewish ritual includes the K'riah (a symbol of their loss and mourning); many of the mourners wear a black ribbon pinned to their clothing. In ancient times, mourners would rip or tear a piece of their clothing to illustrate the rip or tear in their hearts at the loss of their loved one. The black ribbon is symbolic of that custom.

Gordon's Calvary and the Garden Tomb

There are two locations in Israel that have been associated with the death and resurrection of Jesus. One is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, located deep in

the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem.

The other is outside the northern walls of the same Old City of Jerusalem, a location called the Garden Tomb or also Gordon's Calvary. It was named after the British General, Chinese Gordon, who spent a great deal of time in Jerusalem in the mid 19th century.

Gordon was impressed by the naturally eroded image of a skull that he observed on a rough hill side that caught his attention one day as he walked along the Northern wall of the Old City. Added to his growing conviction that this was where Jesus had died and was raised from the dead, was the further discovery of the nearby tomb (now called the Garden Tomb) that had the highly unusual feature of a place for a rolling stone. It was the tomb of a rich man. It appeared to never have been occupied.

Each of these competing traditions for the place of the death and resurrection of Jesus has its proponents and arguments in its favor.

When you go on our holy land tours with the Holy land guru we will usually visit both of these sites. And when we do this it is always interesting to note the reaction of our friends. They are universally drawn to the Garden Tomb and usually repelled by the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

To be fair it must be acknowledged that most professional archeologists and mainline religious denominations including the Roman Catholic Church, favor the former of these choices.

All of the arguments seem to circle around the attempt to locate remnants of the ancient walls of Jerusalem from the time of Jesus.

One would assume that this ought to be a simple matter to determine. But that is not so. This quest opens up a virtual Pandoras box as those walls were long ago destroyed, particularly at the time of the Roman siege of Jerusalem by the 10th Legion in 70 AD when the city and the temple of Herod were torn down stone by stone.

The search for the old walls is further hindered by the fact that the current crowded city sits upon what may be left of them.

Hints as to the location of the destroyed walls can be detected here and there under houses and stores in the Old City. What adds to the complexity of this exercise to locate the walls of Jesus' day is the fact that there was more than one set of walls from different periods. And usually all that can be found is

bits of the foundations of such and then the archeologists have to make certain leaps and draw conclusions based upon what they think they have found. Not a very precise matter.

Interestingly, all of the research begins with the premise that the New Testament description of the location of the place of execution of Jesus is to be trusted and that Jesus was indeed executed outside the city walls in a place of execution that could maximize the example the Romans wanted to make of criminals that defied Rome. Accepting that basic premise, the archeologists must then try to make the evidence fit into that scenario.

The jury is still out in this regard as far as I am concerned.

On the other hand, the arguments for the alternate site, the Garden Tomb, as the place of the death and resurrection of Jesus, can be summed up thus: It is outside the present walls of the Old City (*to be sure not a very compelling case*). It presents the skull like naturally eroded hill that would seem to explain the name of the place as Golgotha or place of the skull. It has a nearby tomb with a place for a rolling stone, an unusual feature to be sure. There is also evidence that this site was the location of an ancient garden as proven by the discovery of the old olive press found there.

Another more spiritually motivated argument in its favor is interesting to consider. The history of blood sacrifice that runs throughout the entire Old Testament all the way back to the time of Abraham and his almost sacrifice of his son Isaac, 2000 years earlier, concentrates these bloody events on an elevation called Mount Moriah.

An argument can be made that Gordon's Calvary is actually located on the Northern terminus of Mount Moriah and thus provides a purposeful conclusion to the practice of blood sacrifice not only with the destruction of the temple some 30 years later, but also with the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, the final sacrifice for the sins of the world, as the Christian message declares.

Finally the more emotional and least compelling argument is that the Garden tomb area lends itself to a feeling of worship and peace. A subjective argument to be sure. It just feels like it should for whatever that means.

By contrast the competing Church of the Holy Sepulchre dates back to the time of Queen Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine in the 4th century. It was built by her to memorialize what the locals reported to her, that this was where the events in Jesus' life had occurred 300 years earlier. Local tradition is

important but not infallible. The building has been destroyed and rebuilt since that original construction some 1800 years ago.

Rather than a place of peace the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is a place of great conflict and tension with warring Christian sects, jealously guarding their little piece of real estate, vying for attention and for prominence and control.

The competing Christian sects are so at war with each other there that the keys to the church are entrusted to a Muslim family. Imagine that. These so called Christians cannot be trusted with the key to the place supposedly built over the tomb of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Something is wrong about that picture don't you think?

We always leave the final decision concerning this matter up to our traveling friends to try to sort it out for themselves as to what they conclude about these competing sites.

One thing we also always do is offer a communion service at the Garden Tomb and we use olive wood cups from Bethlehem and spend a very deeply spiritual period of time considering the sacrifice of Jesus and then we go quietly into the actual tomb itself. That experience forever transforms communion for all. Participation in this service of course is voluntary and no pressure is made to participate. In my more than 46 years of going there I cannot recall a single person not participating.

So what is the bottom line? The jury is still out on that.

Is the Garden Tomb the place?

I don't know. What I do know is that it certainly feels like it is, and a strong argument can be made in its favour, and it provides the opportunity to think on a deeper level about the events that took place there or close nearby and that is enough for me.

The Shroud of Turin

The Shroud of Turin, a 14-foot cloth in which many believe Jesus Christ was buried, may be the most studied artifact in history—and the most controversial. For centuries, scientists and historians have pored over this bloodstained piece of linen that bears the faint outline of a crucified man, hoping to uncover what the image represents and how it was created.

The first documented reference to the shroud dates back to the 14th century. Historical records suggest it changed hands many times until 1578, when it wound up in its current home—the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Turin, Italy. The Catholic Church has never taken an official position on the cloth's authenticity, but the Vatican has made statements attesting to its value and arranged for public viewings.

The advent of photography in the late 19th century forever altered the course of the shroud's history. In 1898, a lawyer named Secondo Pia took the first known photograph of the cloth, and his negative revealed new details—including strikingly clear facial features—that could not be observed with the naked eye. Scientific interest in the relic immediately picked up. In 1902, the French anatomist Yves Delage, an agnostic, inspected the photographs and pronounced that the figure on the shroud was indeed Jesus Christ.

The first direct examinations of the cloth were conducted in the 1970s, most famously by the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP), a team of scientists led by physicist John P. Jackson of the University of Colorado. The group found that the markings on the cloth were consistent with a crucified body and that the stains were real human blood; they also suggested that the image's shading patterns contained three-dimensional information. They could not explain how the imprint ended up on the fabric in the first place.

In 1988, scientists removed a swatch of the shroud for radiocarbon testing. Three independent laboratories concluded that the material originated between 1260 and 1390, leading some to deem it inauthentic. Since then, however, further studies have cast doubt on those results, suggesting that the shroud may indeed date back to the time of Jesus Christ's life and death.

In March 2010, researchers unveiled a revolutionary radiocarbon dating method that could allow scientists to safely establish accurate ages for precious artifacts like the Shroud of Turin. Unlike traditional carbon dating, the new process does not require samples; instead, the entire object is exposed to an electrically charged gas that gently oxidizes its surface without causing damage. This means that, someday soon, the world may have a more precise estimate of the Shroud of Turin's real age.

The Shroud of Turin is NOT a matter of faith, as what follows:

The Inventions of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the Ages

All that the Roman Catholic Church has taught throughout the Ages are certainly not divinely inspired. The Papacy alone, aided by the temporal power,

imposed these “ideas”, to the clergy and the faithful, most of the time completely non-biblical. So:

- Were introduced in the year 120 by the Roman Church: the penances.
- In year 200 the institution of ordination established the priesthood.
- The papacy in the year 220 creates as means of grace to obtain salvation: indulgences.
- In the year 325, the Council of Nicaea accepts the dogma of the 'Holy Trinity' which was introduced by the Council of Constantinople.
- In the year 364 was the “Sunday” introduced, already celebrated by Emperor Constantine.
- In the year 378, Gratien, Emperor of the Western Roman Empire from 375. It prohibited the pagan worship in Rome and forbade the wear the insignia of 'Pontifex Maximus'. Damascus Christian bishop, used the title for himself (year 378).
- In the year 381, the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople meets to define the dogma of the "Holy Trinity". Nectarius was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople and assigned to occupy the second rank after Rome.
- The worship of relics was allowed in the year 397.
- In the year 431, Mary was recognised as the ‘Mother of God’.
- In year 440, Leo I becomes Pope in Rome. He was the first to consider himself, as the “Vicar of Christ”, by creating a new theocracy and decided to wear a tiara rather than a diadem, considering it as a symbol of universal sovereignty.
- In the 449 years, the authority of the Popes as superior to other bishops was recognised.
- In the year 476, Pope Felix III excommunicated the Patriarch of Constantinople. The crisis between the churches of East and West grew worse!
- In the year 595, Gregory the Great introduced in the Catholic Church, a new dogma: the purgatory.
- In the year 600, incense was admitted.
- In the year 815, the invocation of Mary and the Saints was elevated to ecclesiastical tradition.
- In the year 726, Emperor Leo III of Constantinople prohibits the worship of images and orders to destroy them all. The war of the iconoclasts began. Pope Gregory II in Rome excommunicated the Emperor.
- In the year 800, the Pope crowned Charlemagne, King of the Franks, as

Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire; and, in so doing not only places himself above every kingship (the sovereigns), but interferes even in political affairs. He totally ignored the existence of Empress Irene, who reigned in Constantinople.

- In the year 855, concerning the feminine Pope Joan (Jeanne), (known as John the Englishman), with two years reigning after the death of Pope Leo IV, no pope or clergyman had questioned her existence. The reformer John Huss referred to her at the Council of Constance in 1415, but nobody protested. All the bishops present believed in her existence. Only pope Pius II (1458-1464) first disputed the existence of Pope Joan. (True or fiction!)
- In the year 1000, the holy water made its appearance.
- In the year 1054, Pope Leo IX attempts to conquer the Eastern Church in Rome. He excommunicated the Patriarch of Constantinople Cerulius Michel. It is believed that this failure was the main cause in preaching the crusades preached against the pagans and the great schism.
- In the year 1074, the celibacy of the priests was decided.
- In the year 1200, the sacrament of extreme unction.
- In the year 1220, was introduced the worship of the host
- In the year 1311, it was decided that the tiara "crown of the Popes" will be without thorns but richly adorned with gold and diamonds.
- In the year 1349, Indulgences in 1349 began to be easily applied: Sobald des geld in der Kasse klingt, die Seele in den Himmel springt (Once the money in the fund sounds, the soul passes into heaven).
- In the year 1545, it was decreed that the traditions of the Catholic Church have the same value as the Holy Scriptures.
- In the year 1549, was instituted the feast of the dead by the Council of Trent.
- In the year 1854, the Catholic view of the "Immaculate Conception" becomes a dogma.
- In the year 1870, the pontifical infallibility also becomes a dogma.
- In the year 1950, the Papacy created the doctrine of Assumption, solemnity on August 15, or the next Sunday in some countries.
- And, this is not finished, as we all know too well.

III. “I Lay Down My Life, That I Might Take it Again.”

Chapter 18-21

18. The Son of God before His enemies

Verses 1-11. The arrest in Gethsemane

Verses 12-27. Trial before Annas and Caiaphas

Verses 28-40. Trial before Pilate

Chapter 18

1. The Arrest in the Garden. (John 18:1-11.)

2. Before Annas and Caiaphas; Peter’s Denial. (John 18:12-27.)

3. Before Pilate. (John 18:28-38.)

4. Not this Man, But Barabbas. (John 18:39-40.)

The hour of His suffering had now come. With His disciples He went across the brook Cedron into the garden. It is the Kidron mentioned frequently in Old Testament history. When David fled from his own son Absalom, he passed weeping over this brook. (2 Samuel 15:23.) See also 2 Chronicles 15:16 and 2 Kings 23:12. It is claimed that the way by which our Lord left the city was the way by which the scapegoat was yearly, on the great Day of Atonement, sent into the wilderness. The garden, though not named here, is Gethsemane. Judas knew the place, and the Lord knowing that Judas would betray Him, went deliberately there to be delivered into the hands of man. Nothing is said at all by John about the agony, the deep soul-exercise, through which our Lord passed in that night; nor is there a word about His sweat, as it were great drops of blood. All these things are recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, in which His perfect humanity is described, they are passed over in the Gospel of His Deity. But John describes a scene which the other Gospels omit. He manifests His power. When the band of men said that they sought Jesus of Nazareth, He said unto them, “I am He.” Then the whole company went backward and fell to the ground. What a scene that must have been! Several hundred men with their lanterns, torches and weapons all prostrate on the ground before the One Man. They stood in the presence of Jehovah and His power and majesty was present so that the one word was sufficient to prostrate them all. It was a striking evidence that neither the treachery of Judas, nor the wicked hatred of the Jews, nor the power of

Rome, could touch our Lord. But the hour had now arrived when He was ready to give Himself up. Augustine made the following comment: “What shall He do when He comes to judge, Who did this when He was about to be judged? What shall be His might when He comes to reign, Who had this might when He was about to die?” Then after His second answer He said, “If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.” Willingly He allows Himself bound, on the condition that His own must be free. It is a blessed illustration of the Gospel. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep. Substitution is fully revealed in this gracious statement. He gives Himself up that His people might be free.

Then Simon Peter drew the sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus. Peter had slept; had he been watching and praying it would not have occurred. And how beautiful the words of the Lord: “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” Perfect willingness and readiness to drink the bitter cup were thus expressed in the presence of His disciples and His enemies.

Then follows the account of Peter’s denial, the questioning before Annas, which is only reported by John, and finally He was taken into the judgment hall before Pilate. The miserable character of the Roman Governor is brought fully to light in this Gospel. He was destitute of all moral courage; he acted against better knowledge; he knew the Lord was innocent, yet he dared not to acquit Him for fear of displeasing the Jews. John 18:32 refers to the Lord’s death by crucifixion, from the hands of the Gentiles. Note the four questions of Pilate. “Art Thou the King of the Jews?”--“What hast Thou done?”--“Art Thou a King then?”--“What is truth?” The Roman historian Suetonius states that many rumors were then prevalent that a King was about to rise among the Jews who would have dominion over the whole world. No doubt Pilate knew of these rumors and therefore asked the Lord about His Kingship. The answer of our Lord, “My Kingdom is not of this world,” has often been misconstrued to mean that the Lord never will have a Kingdom in this world in the sense of a literal Kingdom. Our post-millennial friends use it against a literal interpretation of the prophecies relating to the coming of an earthly Kingdom of Christ. What our Lord meant by saying “My Kingdom is not of this world” is, that His Kingdom has not its origin or nature from the world. He will receive the Kingdom promised unto Him from the Father’s hands. (Daniel 7:14.)

The Blood and the Water

(haima kai hudor): The remarkable passage (John 19:34) from which this expression is taken refers to the piercing of the Saviour's side by the soldier. The evangelist notes here what he, as an eyewitness of the crucifixion, had seen as a surprising fact. Whereon this surprise was founded cannot now be more than guessed at. Nor is it necessary here to discuss the reason or reasons why the apostle mentions the fact at all in his report, whether merely for historical accuracy and completeness, or as a possible proof of the actual death of Christ, which at an early date became a subject of doubt among certain Christian sects, or whether by it he wished to refer to the mystical relation of baptismal cleansing ("water") and the atonement ("blood") as signified thereby. Let it suffice to state that a reference often made to 1 John 5:6,8 is here quite out of place. This passage, though used by certain Fathers of the church as a proof of the last-named doctrine, does not indeed refer to this wonderful incident of the crucifixion story. The argument of 1 Jn 5:8 concerns the Messiahship of Jesus, which is proved by a threefold witness, for He is the one whom at the baptism of John ("water") God attested as the Messiah by the heavenly voice, "This is my beloved Son," who at the crucifixion ("blood") had the testimony that the Father had accepted His atoning sacrifice, and whose promise of sending the Comforter fulfilled on Pentecost ("spirit") presented us with the final proof of the completed Messianic task. The same expression in 1 John 5:6 refers probably to the same argument with the implied meaning that Jesus came not only by the merely ceremonial water of baptism, but also by the more important, because vivifying, blood of atonement.

The physiological aspect of this incident of the crucifixion has been first discussed by Gruner (*Commentatio de morte Jesu Christi vera*, Halle, 1805), who has shown that the blood released by the spear-thrust of the soldier must have been extravagated before the opening of the side took place, for only so could it have been poured forth in the described manner. While a number of commentators have opposed this view as a fanciful explanation, and have preferred to give the statement of the evangelist a symbolical meaning in the sense of the doctrines of Baptism and Eucharist (so Baur, Strauss, Reuss and others), some modern physiologists are convinced that in this passage a wonderful phenomenon is reported to us, which, inexplicable to the sacred historian, contains for us an almost certain clue to the real cause of the Savior's death. Dr. Stroud (*On the Physiological Cause of the Death of Christ*, London, 1847) basing his remarks on numerous postmortems, pronounced the opinion that here we had a proof of the death of Christ being due not to the effects of crucifixion but to "laceration or rupture of the heart" as a consequence of supreme mental agony and sorrow. It is well attested that usually the suffering

on the cross was very prolonged. It often lasted two or three days, when death would supervene from exhaustion. There were no physical reasons why Christ should not have lived very much longer on the cross than He did. On the other hand, death caused by laceration of the heart in consequence of great mental suffering would be almost instantaneous. In such a case the phrase "of a broken heart," becomes literally true. The life blood flowing through the aperture or laceration into the pericardium or caul of the heart, being extravasated, soon coagulates into the red clot (blood) and the limpid serum (water). This accumulation in the heart-sac was released by the spear-thrust of the soldier (which here takes providentially the place of a postmortem without which it would have been impossible to determine the real cause of death), and from the gaping wound there flow the two component parts of blood distinctly visible. Several distinguished physicians have accepted Dr. Stroud's argument, and some have strengthened it by the observation of additional symptoms. We may mention Dr. James Begbie, fellow and late president of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, Sir J. Y. Simpson, professor at the University of Edinburgh, and others (see Dr. Hanna, *Our Lord's Life on Earth*, Appendix I). The latter refers to the loud cry, mentioned by the Synoptists (Mt 27:50; Mk 15:37; Lk 23:46), which preceded the actual death of Jesus, as a symptom characteristic of cases of "broken heart." He adds that Dr. Walshe, professor of medicine in University College, London, one of the greatest authorities on the diseases of the heart, says that a "piercing shriek" is always uttered in such cases immediately before the end.

While we may never reach a state of absolute certainty on this subject, there is no valid reason to deny the probability of this view of the death of Christ. It certainly gives a more solemn insight into Christ's spiritual anguish, "the travail of his soul" on our behalf, which weighed upon Him so heavily that long before the usual term of bodily and therefore endurable suffering of crucified persons Christ's loving heart broke, achieving the great atoning sacrifice for all mankind.

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Chapter 19

19. The Son of God condemned, crucified, buried

Verses 1-15. Pilate brings Jesus before the populace

Verses 16-30. The crucifixion.

Verses 31-37. Fulfilment of Scripture

Verses 38-42. Jesus' burial in a garden

Verses 1-42

- 1. Behold the Man!* (John 19:1-7.)
- 2. The Last Question of Pilate and Christ's Last Word.* (John 19:8-11.)
- 3. Delivered up and Crucified.* (John 19:12-18.)
- 4. The Title upon the Cross.* (John 19:19-22.)
- 5. The Parted Garments.* (John 19:23-24.)
- 6. Behold Thy Son! Behold Thy Mother!* (John 19:25-27.)
- 7. It is Finished!* (John 19:28-30.)
- 8. His Legs not Broken.* (John 19:31-33.)
- 9. The Testimony of the Scriptures.* (John 19:34-37.)
- 10. The Burial in the Garden.* (John 19:38-42.)

The cruel scourging, such as cruel Rome had invented, then took place. It often was so severe that prisoners died under the awful blows. What pen can ever describe the suffering and the shame He endured! Perhaps Pilate thought this awful scourging would satisfy the Jews, so that the Lord would be released. Then the mockery followed. The crown of thorns, the emblem of the curse of sin, was put upon His holy brow. The sin-bearer wore that crown for us, that we might wear a crown of glory. When He comes again He comes with many crowns. (Revelation 19:12.) They put the robe of purple, the imperial color, upon Him; ridiculed and smote Him. Then Pilate led Him forth and said: "Behold the Man." Was it pity or contempt? Most likely both. But oh! the sight!

To see Him, Who is the Life and the Light, the Holy One, the Creator, treated thus by the creature of the dust! Satan's power energized the chief priests and officers, and the answer they give as they behold "the Man of Sorrows" is "Crucify Him!" "He made Himself the Son of God" was their wicked accusation. He is the Son of God and because He had come in marvelous love to this poor lost world, He was condemned to die.

The last word the Lord Jesus spoke to Pilate is found in John 19:11. The authority given from above is from God, Who spared not His own Son; but the Jews, who delivered Him up to Pilate, have the greater sin. Once more we hear Pilate's voice, "Behold your King!" They answer: "Away with Him! Crucify Him!" And then again: "Shall I crucify your King?" The answer of complete apostasy follows: "We have no King but Caesar." Pilate is lost; he delivered Him to be crucified. We see the Lord bearing His cross to the place of the skull, Golgotha. Who can describe His agony and His sufferings as He was lifted up! Two others were crucified with Him. "He was numbered with transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12.)

Above His cross was the title written by Pilate himself. It was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek. There is no discrepancy between the different Gospels, because they give the inscriptions in different words. Pilate worded them differently in the three languages. Matthew and John report the Hebrew title; Mark gives the Latin and Luke the Greek inscription. (Matthew was guided to leave out "of Nazareth." This is in full accord with the purpose of his Gospel.)

The coat (robe) without seam, woven from the top throughout, is only mentioned by John. The German expositor Bengel calls attention to the fact that our Lord never "rent" His garments in sorrow like Job, Jacob, Joshua, Caleb, Jephthah, Hezekiah, Mordecai, Ezra, Paul and Barnabas. The seamless robe is typical of His perfect righteousness, which now was stripped from Him by man's hand and thus He received the place as the evildoer. Then the prophecy of Psalms 22:18 was literally fulfilled. Could there be anything else but a literal fulfilment of Prophecy?

"The importance of interpreting prophecy literally, and not figuratively, is strongly shown in this verse. The system of interpretation which unhappily prevails among many Christians--I mean the system of spiritualizing away all the plain statements of the prophets, and accommodating them to the Church of Christ-- can never be reconciled with such a verse as this. The plain, literal meaning of words should evidently be the meaning placed on all the statements of Old Testament prophecy. This remark of course does not apply to symbolical prophecies, such as those of the seals, trumpets, and vials in Revelation."

And then the loving tenderness He manifested towards His mother. (Here, with one exception in the first chapter of Acts, we part with Mary; she is not mentioned in the after-books. In all the doctrine of the epistles she has no place. Blessed among women as she is surely by her connection with the human nature of our Lord, the entire silence of Scripture as to her in that fullness of Christian truth which it was the office of the Spirit of truth to communicate is the decisive overthrow of the whole Babel-structure of Mariolatry which Romanism has built up upon a mere sand-foundation. She remains for us in the word of God, a simple woman rejoicing in God her Saviour,--a stone in the temple to His praise, and with no temple of her own. To use the grace of the Redeemer in taking flesh among us by her means to exalt the mother to the dishonor of Christ her Lord is truly a refined wickedness worthy of the arch-deceiver of mankind.--Numerical Bible.)

John has nothing to say of the darkness which enshrouded the Cross. Nor do we find here the cry of the forsaken One: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" The Father did not forsake the Son; this was His statement in John 16:32. "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." It is not so much the awful thirst connected with crucifixion which is viewed here, as it is His perfect obedience to do the Father's will and that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. "He bowed His head and gave up the spirit." In Luke's Gospel we read that He said: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (23:46); John says nothing of Him commending His spirit, for as the Son of God He did not need to commend Himself to the Father. The final word preceding the giving up of His spirit is the majestic "It is finished." In the Greek it is but one word, "tetelestai." Never before and never after was ever spoken one word which contains and means so much. It is the shout of the mighty Victor. And who can measure the depths of this one word!

Psalms 34:20 was fulfilled; "A bone of Him shall not be broken." Scripture had to be fulfilled. The spear, which pierced His blessed side, fully evidences that He had died. The blood and water have a most precious meaning. That it was a Supernatural thing we do not doubt. The blood stands for the atonement, which had been made; the water for cleansing. The Jews have a strange tradition that from the rock which was smitten by Moses in the wilderness there flowed, when first smitten, blood and water. (Shemoth Rabba.) John alone mentions this blessed fact. "It is a beautiful testimony of divine grace, answering the last insult man could heap upon Him. They drove Him outside the camp, put Him to death on the Cross, and then, to make His death doubly sure, the soldier pierced His side. Salvation was God's answer to man's insult, for the blood and water were the signs of it." John speaks of this never to be forgotten occurrence, in his first

Epistle (5:6). There he mentions water first. It denotes purifying which man needs, and that has come with all its attending blessings by His precious blood. But notice John writes: “And again another scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced.” He does not say, another Scripture was fulfilled. Zechariah 12:10 was not fulfilled when He died, but will be fulfilled when He comes again and the believing remnant of Israel mourns for Him.

Nicodemus is mentioned for the third and last time in the Gospel. He came to Jesus by night and heard the Gospel

message from His lips. Later he ventured a weak and timid defense (7:48-53); here he comes out boldly honouring the body of Jesus. Surely he believed and therefore confessed the Lord.

Chapter 20

20. The resurrection

Verses 1-29. Evidence of the resurrection

Verses 30-31. Purpose of John’s gospel

Verses 1-31

- 1. The Empty Sepulchre. (John 20:1-10.)*
- 2. The Risen One and Mary of Magdala. (John 20:11-18.)*
- 3. The Gathered Company and He in the midst. (John 20:19-23.)*
- 4. The Second Time. (John 20:24-29.)*
- 5. The Purpose of John’s Record. (John 20:30-31.)*

“I lay down my life that I might take it up again.” The sufferings were accomplished. The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep and now we learn how He arose from the dead. John 2:19 was fulfilled. “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” The stone is rolled away; the sepulchre is empty. Mary of Magdala carried the good news to Peter and John. Peter and John ran together to the sepulchre, and John out ran Peter. In the sepulchre all is in order. If a thief had stolen the body he would have acted in fear and haste. A thief would not have gone about in such an orderly way. The linen clothes were lying in the proper place; the napkin (soudarion--sweatcloth) was folded inwards

(this is the meaning of “entetuligmenon”) in a place by itself. He had detached Himself in a miraculous way without disturbing them at all. It is an evidence of His resurrection in His own power as Son of God.

And how beautiful is the incident when Mary stood weeping and looking into the sepulchre! She beheld two angels there, yet she was not frightened when she beheld these mysterious Beings. Her heart was so occupied with her Lord that she did not even inquire of the angels. But they addressed her: “Woman, why weepest thou?” Then He came Himself. Her tears of ignorance and unbelief held her eyes that she did not recognize Him till He, Who in resurrection is the great Shepherd of the sheep, called her by name. What sound that one word “Mary” must have had in her ears and heart! She would fall at His feet and hold Him, as the other women held Him by the feet and worshipped Him. (Matthew 28:9.) But He told her: “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God.” Matthew reports how they touched Him and held Him by the feet. He is presented in that Gospel as Israel’s King. Not a word is said in the first Gospel of His ascension. He is presented in Matthew as if He were to remain on earth, in an earthly relationship with His people. This is why He permitted the holding of His feet. It is symbolical of how the remnant of Israel will enjoy His presence on earth as King in the day of His Return. But John’s Gospel reveals a new relationship. He is to ascend into heaven to His Father. She must not hold Him as to keep Him here. (The word “touch” really means: to fasten oneself to, to hang on, to lay hold of.) As true believers we are linked with the glorified Lord. This higher relationship He makes known and she becomes the bearer of the great message. The relationship centers in the word “brethren.” Risen from the dead He calls His own “brethren” and speaks of “My Father and your Father, my God and your God.” He is not ashamed to call us brethren, because He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one. (Psalms 22:21-22; Hebrews 2:11-12.) Thus He, the Son of God, Who laid down His life and took it again, has brought us to God, His God and His Father. The Grain of Wheat has brought forth its blessed and gracious fruit in resurrection.

The evening scene of that wonderful day, when He stood in their midst, is very suggestive. In a measure the assembled disciples correspond to the two who, in the first chapter, on the first day abode with Him. Though John does not mention the church, here is a beautiful picture of what the church is. They are shut in and Judaism is shut out. He is in the midst. “Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst.” Here it is fulfilled for the first time. There is the message of Peace; the sending forth; the Holy Spirit, Who comes from Him, Who as the last Adam is the quickening Spirit. He

communicates spiritual life, which is divine life. And the authority of the church in discipline on earth, representing Himself, is made known by Him in John 20:23. This authority is not conferred upon a priestly class, a doctrine which has produced the most obnoxious corruption of Christianity, but upon believers, who constitute a church.

Thomas corresponds to Nathanael at the close of the first chapter. Both are unbelieving. Both see first and then believe. Both acknowledge Him as God. Thomas, like Nathanael, is the type of the unbelieving Jewish remnant. The Lord comes the second time and then the remnant of His earthly people will fall at His feet and say, "My Lord and my God."

The Resurrection Authenticated

The Resurrection of Christ is the most powerful event in history. It has affected the last 2000 years of history and politics, from peasants to kings to nations. Christianity has spread across the entire world, into every country and into a vast number of ethnic groups and languages. Billions of people have experienced the life-giving, healing, forgiveness and freedom offered by God because Jesus Christ conquered death and rose again from the grave.

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:12-22 that **without the resurrection of Christ, the Christian faith is useless.** "And if Christ be not raised," Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." There are many skeptics who disregard the resurrection of Jesus Christ of Nazareth as a fable. However, the evidence for Jesus' resurrection is extremely strong, even to the point of converting some who sought to disprove it:

The Empty Tomb:

Though well-trained Roman soldiers guarded the tomb of Jesus Christ, it was empty 3 days after Jesus' death as Jesus had repeatedly foretold (Matt 12:40, Mark 8:31). The guards had fled (a death penalty offense). The massive stone had been rolled away, and the body was gone - and was never produced by the enemies of the Christians. The linen grave clothes in which the Jews bury their dead were still in the tomb, undisturbed. From the Jewish historian Josephus to a compilation of 5th-century Jewish writings called the "Toledoth Jeshu," even Jewish sources and traditions admit that the tomb was empty. The body was never found.

Living Witnesses:

There were a multitude of witnesses who saw Jesus Christ alive after his death. The disciples, the travelers on the road to Emmaus and a number of women all spoke to Jesus alive. Thomas doubted until he was able to put his fingers into Jesus' wounds (John 20:26-27). He later spread the Gospel all the way to India. The apostle Paul tells of 500 people to whom Jesus appeared at one time, most of whom were still alive and available for questioning when Paul wrote his letter (1 Corinthians 15:6). When several people testify in a courtroom that they witnessed an event, and their accounts are found consistent with each other, their testimony is considered factual information. Jesus Christ was seen alive many times by hundreds of different people over the course of forty days after his death (John 20-21, Acts 1:3).

The Disciples:

Christ's followers, who had been fearful and who had run away when Jesus was arrested, were completely changed after the Resurrection and became courageous witnesses. Peter, who had denied knowing Christ when recognized by a simple servant girl, became the powerfully bold leader of those who had seen Christ alive, speaking to the thousands gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Shavuot - Pentecost. A person may die for a lie if they do not know it is a lie. But people do not give their lives up and face severe persecution to spread a lie they themselves invented. The fact that the disciples willingly suffered beatings and persecution and death is strong evidence that they had actually witnessed the resurrection they refused to stop telling people about.

Saul of Tarsus:

A devoutly religious Pharisee, who persecuted the Church and had Christ's followers thrown in prison, Paul had his life absolutely changed by his encounter with Christ. He became a devoted follower of Christ himself, spreading the Gospel throughout Turkey and Greece in the face of beatings and shipwrecks and imprisonment and, finally, execution. "If the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt." - F. F. Bruce, Manchester University

Skeptics' Arguments Against the Resurrection:

The Hallucination Theory claims that the witnesses who met the resurrected Jesus were all "seeing things" - they were hallucinating. However, this goes

against common sense as well as psychological principles. Five hundred people do not all hallucinate the same thing. Jesus appeared to many people at many different times. Also, the body was never produced.

The Swoon Theory argues that Jesus did not die, that he simply fainted from loss of blood and exhaustion. However, this also goes against common sense. The Romans were professionals who severely whipped Jesus, hung him on a cross, and then stabbed him in the side with a spear to make sure he was dead. He was in the grave for three days, wrapped head to foot in a burial cloth, without food or water or medical treatment. When he appeared to his disciples he was completely whole and healthy and his appearance inspired awe and worship that lasted throughout the rest of the disciples' lives.

The Disciples Faked the Resurrection

Discouraged, fearful fishermen and former tax collectors, whose teacher had been viciously murdered, were in little position to take on a detachment of trained Roman soldiers guarding the tomb. They would have had to create a fantastic plan in order to fight off or bribe the professional soldiers, raid the tomb, unbind the grave clothes from Christ's body, take the body away, and hide it where nobody would ever find it. The Roman soldiers faced death if they failed in their guard duty, and the disciples had little money for bribing anybody. Many people would have had to be involved in the conspiracy, and all those involved would not only have known the truth, but would know that they were risking meeting the same fate as their recently crucified leader. And what purpose could it possibly serve, if Jesus were dead? They would have had nothing to gain. Their leader was gone and they would have only faced persecution and death for their invented resurrection story.

And again, the disciples' attitudes completely changed after the Resurrection and especially after Pentecost. They became bold and courageous in spreading their message, fearless of beatings or imprisonment. They never sought to fight Rome or to establish any position or kingdom or authority for themselves. They had nothing to gain, physically speaking. They simply went about the known world, telling their story in spite of persecution and suffering, poverty and ridicule. Their message quickly spread across the Middle East and Europe and even into Asia without any military conquest or political support involved, and in spite of strong opposition. Only belief and hope based in the reality of their experiences would have produced such dedication in the lives of Christ's followers.

Perhaps the greatest evidence today of Christ's resurrection is the work that he

is still doing in the lives of every day people. In the name of Jesus, people are still being healed emotionally and physically and spiritually by the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Sinners are being freed from the burden and pain and shame of sin, sometimes immediately, sometimes after long years of steady work by the Holy Spirit in their lives. Hearts are being mended and lives are being turned around. The best evidence today is the faithful follower of Christ who can say, "He saved me, and I am not the person I used to be" just as the apostles testified 2000 years ago.

Chapter 21

21. Epilogue: instruction in spiritual service

Verses 1-2. Post-resurrection appearance

Verses 3-25. Peter instructed in spiritual service

Verses 1-25

1. At the Sea of Tiberias. The Third Manifestation. (John 21:1-14.)

2. Peter's Restoration and Ministry; the manner of His Death Predicted. (John 21:15-19.)

3. Tarry Till I Come. (John 21:20-23.)

4. Conclusion. (John 21:24-25.)

This chapter has often been looked upon as an appendix to the Gospel of John. It is not. Quite true, John states in the last two verses of the preceding chapter the purpose of this Gospel, but that does not mean that the twenty-first chapter has no connection with the Gospel itself. John 21:14 shows that it belongs to the Gospel proper.

The third time that He showed Himself after His resurrection --The first time on the first day of the week (John 20:19); this is typical of the present age, when He is in the midst of His people. The second time, when Thomas was present; typical of His second coming and manifestation to Israel. The third time on the Lake of Tiberias; typical of the future blessings through Israel, and corresponding to the third day in Chapter ii, when there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. The miraculous draught of fishes took place by His power, but the net did not go to pieces. It was different before His death and resurrection; then the net broke. The scene on the Lake of Tiberias foreshadows the ingathering of

the nations into His Kingdom when He returns. The number of the fish caught is given, one hundred and fifty-three. The number of the nations of the world known at that time was exactly 153. How significant this is! Thus all the nations of the world will be gathered into His Kingdom.

But there are blessed spiritual lessons here. He is seen as Lord over His own. He can direct our service as He directed the disciples in casting the net at the right side of the ship. He provides for the need of His servants, as He did then in preparing a breakfast for them. (John 21:9.) He restores His servants who fail, as He so graciously restored Peter, and gives a higher and a better service. He also appoints the time and the manner of the servant's departure out of this life; He told Peter when and how he was to die. He said of John, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" The Lord did not say that he should not die. John lived the longest of the disciples, and on the Isle of Patmos he beheld the events of the future and heard the voice, "Come up hither" and immediately he was in the Spirit and beheld heavenly things. The words of our Lord find likewise an application in connection with John's writings.

"It is simple enough to say that John lives on in his writings. But then it might be urged, that is only what all the inspired writers will; still it cannot but come to mind that, in fact, John's writings not only predict circumstantially the Lord's return, but stretch over all the intervening time till then. While he does not take us up into heaven, as Paul does, and show us our place in the glorified Man up there, yet all the more he seems to abide with the people of God on earth until Christ's return, as a human presence watching and caring for them. John may be thus truly said to be waiting with those on earth for his absent Lord in a way in which we could not speak of any other inspired writer." (F.W. Grant.)

The last word John reports in His Gospel, coming from the lips of our Lord, is "Follow thou me." And thus He speaks to all of His people. Wonderful Gospel it is, this Gospel of the Son of God and the Eternal Life! How full and rich each portion of it! And oh! the Grace which has sought us, saved us, made us one with Him, keeps us and which will soon bring us home to the Father's house with its many mansions. May we follow Him in loving obedience, till He comes.

The Seven Miracles in the Fourth Gospel

You will find many things mentioned in the Gospel of John which are not found in the first three. Some people scratch their heads over that. Why John mentions so many profound things that the others seemingly do not even care to mention. There are reasons for that. I do not want to go into all of the details today, obviously, but just to point out that there are major differences between the first 3 Gospels which are very near to each other in content, and the Gospel of John which is the fourth Gospel and it is nowhere near in content like the first three.

This Gospel of John is not so much a biography of Christ's life. That again is very clear. It is nothing like a biography at all. It is true that it is in a narrative form that follows a loose historical sequence of events; you have to admit that. But it is not written in the form of a biography. This Gospel is in the New Testament to give a mature commentary on the meaning and significance of Christ's life. It shows a theological and symbolic significance of what Christ was and is doing for us and for the whole world. This is one of the keys to the understanding (in my judgment) of the Gospel of John.

The emphasis in John is not parochial. It is not so much catered to Jewish thinking, Jewish theology, the Jewish way of life. The Gospel of Matthew certainly is that way. There is no question about it. Mark is a little different, but still it is quite Hebraic in many ways, but it is different. Luke who was a companion of the Apostle Paul, we would have to say was writing primarily for a Gentile audience.

When you come to the Gospel of John however, he seems to depart from all three of their ways of looking at things, and becomes what I consider very universalistic. He now wants to approach not just particular groups, whether they be Jewish or Gentile, but now he is talking about the whole world. The emphasis of his theology is upon the whole world. Many, many times as you are aware, he emphasizes Christ as the saviour of the world, all the world. In my article on the Unpardonable Sin (on the website it is titled "What is the Sin Against the Holy Spirit."), that is just a brief discourse on that subject. Most of the verses which are very universalistic in nature, speaking about the scope of the salvation of God are centred primarily in the Gospel of John, almost all of them. I mean all of them from the Gospels that is. The Gospel emphasizes that Christ is the Saviour of the world and how all men will come to glorify God.

It also emphasizes other things like Christ meeting the Samaritan at the well. That may seem like a very insignificant event. But when the apostles came back after buying food at noonday, they came back to the well where they had left

Christ, they found Him talking to this woman. First of all, to talk to a woman like that was a little out of the custom of the time, but to be talking on spiritual matters with a Samaritan woman, who was a Gentile, or half-Jew, or half-Gentile, however you want to look at it, very despised by the Jews, they could hardly believe it.

Why is it that John gives practically a whole chapter of Christ speaking to a woman, and a Samaritan. The others do not even mention that in the Gospels at all. But the emphasis of John is more universalistic, how that Christ was interested in all peoples. Almost a whole chapter is given to that.

He also mentions in the latter part of the Gospel of John how the Greeks went up to the worship of the Temple. He emphasizes Christ speaking even to Greeks. You do not find that in the other Gospels.

Also, we find that the festivals of the Old Testament, which you would call God's festivals from the Old Testament point of view, and the circumcision apostles down in Jerusalem certainly kept the festivals of God for several years after Pentecost. They were keeping Pentecost. They were keeping Passover undoubtedly, perhaps with a new meaning. They were keeping the other days, I have not the slight doubt about it. In fact the book of Acts substantiates that they were.

Now the apostle John is writing long after, say 61 C.E. or 70 C.E. (after the destruction of Jerusalem) is now calling the festivals "the Jewish festivals." There seems to be a definite change. He seems to be emphasizing Gentile things. His whole geography is Gentile. His explanations of Hebrew expressions show that he was primarily speaking to Gentiles. His theology is most important here, because in the 4th chapter when He was talking to the Samaritan woman, and she said, is it in this mountain here, Mount Gerazim, where the old Samaritans had a temple at one time, is it in this mountain that we ought to worship God, or is it in Jerusalem where the Jews had their Temple down there? You remember the classic statement that Christ made, **"It is not in this mountain, nor is it in Jerusalem that God wishes anyone to worship Him, but in spirit and in truth"** (paraphrasing John 4:20–23). That is the key. That statement, along with many others, is showing that Christ is deemphasizing physical things, whether they be Gentile, or whether they be Jewish, and putting it on a high spiritual level.

What does this all mean? It means that John's Gospel has very mature thinking in it, very late thinking. It was written long after, several years after the other

three Gospels were already written, and maybe some of them had been circulated by this time.

The 7 miracles which I wish to speak about today, which Christ performed before His crucifixion are presented in a highly symbolic way. Actually I guess you could say the whole Gospel can be described as having symbol to it. I am going to point out some of those symbolic significances in a few moments. The Significance of these 7 miracles are highlighted by the theological teachings found in this message of the Gospel of John. John's teachings are the pinnacle doctrines of the New Testament in many ways of looking at them. I am convinced that the Gospel of John could not have been written without the prior knowledge of the Mystery revelation which God gave to Paul and others starting about the year 61 C.E.

The Mystery

All of you who have heard my lectures on the Mystery, but a very profound thing happened about 61 C.E. as far as the apostle Paul and others were concerned. They received the full and final revelation of God. I will tell you what it did. It completely changed the theology of prior times in many ways of thinking. What it did was to do something which had never been thought of before in the history of the world.

The Mystery revelation is revealed in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, and in subsequent books, such as 1 and 2 Timothy, but mainly in those three first. I do not believe that John's Gospel could have been written with the theological position that it takes unless it would have first understood the fullness of the revelation of God given to the apostle Paul and others, starting about 61 C.E. The Gospel of John is complementary to Paul and reflects, in my judgment, the profound disclosures given to Paul by the Eternal God.

While John was once an apostle to the circumcision—is there any doubt about that? Of course not. James, Peter, John were the apostles to the circumcized, as mentioned in Galatians chapter 2. They had a mission primarily to Jews. In John's early career he never strayed from the limits of his commission. After 61 C.E. and more particularly, for John, after 70 C.E.—and the reason I say 70 C.E., is because that is the time Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. The Temple was destroyed. The priesthood went by the wayside. The holy days in Jerusalem became defunct for all practical purposes. Everything connected with Judaism from a physical point of view, disappeared in 70 C.E. From a physical point of view it was wiped off the surface of the map. There were some

attempted revivals, that is true. But on the other hand, they never did succeed as far as Christianity was concerned.

After you pass 61 C.E., or more particularly 70 C.E., a whole new ballgame begins as far as Christian understanding is concerned. John after 70 C.E. in my judgment, assumes a new role. He is no longer just an apostle to the circumcised, which is what he was up to that time. He stayed within those limits. Remember what he said in the little book 3rd John? Do not go even and take anything from the Gentiles, even a mere pittance of money. Do not be supported by them. He was staying within the limits of his commission, just like the apostle Paul was staying within the limits of his also, at that particular time.

After 70 C.E. something begins to change. Really it starts to change in 61 C.E. with the revelation of the Mystery that the apostle Paul gives. One of the main keys to what the apostle Paul says is fundamental to understanding the 7 miracles of John. What Paul said was, with the revelation of the Mystery, the middle wall of partition was broken down. The middle wall of partition that separated Jew from Gentile in the Temple was now broken down and the holy altar is now open to view, to access by anybody whether they be Jew or Gentiles. All of the regulations in the Old Testament concerning the Temple worship, priesthood and everything like that are abolished in Christ. In other words, with the revelation of the Mystery, the middle wall, the physical barrier that kept Jew and Gentile separate from each other, has now disappeared. Jew and Gentile can now walk up hand-in-hand, not as Jew and Gentile, but they can walk up as a new man in Christ, a new creature, never even heard of before. He is not a new Israel either, he is just not a new Gentile. He is a new man. He is new altogether. And a new relationship has now taken place.

In actual fact, with the destruction of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, the final barriers there that kept man away from the Mercy Seat which represents, of course, God's throne in heaven, have now been broken down as well. This new man, no matter what race he is, he is just a person, now with Christ's blood sanctifying him can walk past that altar and walk up into the Holy of Holies and sit down with God the Father on His throne. It is most remarkable when you think about it.

For me this is the central key to the understanding of the Mystery, though it does not mean it all. A new man comes along. When you get rid of the blockage or the barrier between Jew and Gentile, and Israel does not theologically become important any longer, the commissions given to the apostles to the circumcised do not have the efficacy that they had before, because theologically speaking

there are no circumcised. Theologically speaking, in one way, there are no Gentiles. They are all the same. I suppose you would say, we are all nations.

Maybe some of this is theoretical, but on the other hand I would say that when the Gospel of John, John was writing to Gentiles. He had to explain Hebrew terms to them. Obviously if he was writing to Jews he would not have to explain those things. His whole geographical patterns that he uses are clearly Gentile as well. Everything is now universalistic. Christ has become now the Saviour of the whole world. John's Gospel is really in effect the final mature teaching of what Christ was doing while on this earth here—though they did not understand it at the time—but it is mature reflected teaching on what Christ was really doing. He was not only coming to die for the Jews. He was coming to die for the entirety of the world. That is what we find in John's Gospel.

John's Gospel is universal. Its application is universal in a theological sense. The 7 miracles reflect John's new theological concepts that have been given by God through the revelation of the Mystery. The 7 miracles have profound significance. Why was the Gospel of John written? In one way they were written around those miracles, not exclusively, but around those 7 miracles. Maybe I should say, the 8 miracles that I am going to talk about a little later on. These 7 miracles are prior to the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of John was written to point out some of the significances of these miracles. Look at John 20:30–31. Here the apostle John gives his reason in two verses why he wrote the Gospel in the first place.

"And many other signs [or miracles] truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written [he only gave a few], that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

He wrote this at the end of the book. By the time he wrote that, the 7 signs had been given. In fact the 8th sign had already come because that was the resurrection of the dead of Jesus Christ. They were given in the presence of the disciples so that people might be able to understand that **"Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you might have life through his name."** Let us look at the signs that John put in his Gospel. They reflect very mature teaching.

The first sign is the changing of water into wine. That is found in John 2:1,

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to

the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus saith unto her, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.'"

People have wondered what Mary was actually after here. Was she actually asking for a sign of some kind? What Jesus gave her was a sign. I suppose, though it was not recorded she was asking for some miracle connected with wine. Mark in your notes the word "wine," water into wine. It is going to be quite significant from a symbolic point of view. **"Jesus saith unto her, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.'"**

In the 7th chapter of John when His brothers, kinsmen of His like His mother, wanted Him to go up to Jerusalem and proclaim Himself at that time, He also said in John 7:6, **"Mine hour is not yet come,"** or fully come. When did it fully come? When Jesus was hanging on the cross¹, remember one of the last things he said? **"It is finished"** (John 19:30). Something happened there on the cross, when the blood was coming out of Him. Something happened there that made His life, His mission, perfected. It was finished. It came to an end. The greatest miracle of all took place, not necessarily at the death, but what happened three days later at the resurrection. What was happening at his death was the blood, of course, cleansing people of sin.

We are going to have something about blood in this, but the word blood is not going to be used. What is being talked about here is wine. Verses 2:5–6,

"His mother saith unto the servants, 'Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.' And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece."

I just might mention in this verse 6, John has to explain that this was after the manner of purifying if the Jews. If he were writing to Jewish people at the time, being within his commission just to the Jews, why does he have to explain about purification rites to them. They would have known already. John 2:7–11,

"Jesus saith unto them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, 'Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.' And they bare *it*. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, 'Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.' This beginning of miracles

[signs] **did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."**

The emphasis here is that the first miracle was the changing of water into wine. Do you know what this shows Christ as being? It shows Him as being a Creator. He can take one substance and change it into another. That is the first miracle. Is it not interesting, He changed it into wine.

When you look at this at first, just because He changed it into wine, does not make sense, perhaps. Let us continue through the Gospel of John and you are going to find that there are several substances that John is very interested in: water, wine, bread, fish. These are the substances he is going to be interested in almost all of the miracles. The first miracle is the changing of water into wine. This shows that He has power over mass, that is He can take water and change it into wine.

Wine normally takes time to ferment. You have first of all grape juice. Maybe you have water coming down as rain out of the sky. It goes into the plant. The plant soaks it up and makes the grapes. The grapes are then picked and pressed. You have grape juice. It takes from 40–50 days for it to turn into a new wine. It might take longer with certain types. To make wine, it takes time. Christ Jesus took water without any vines and changed it into the finest quality of wine without any time being used, except that instant.

Perhaps this is symbol (and I know it is), but this shows that Christ was a Creator and He does not need any time like you and I do. He has power over substance. He has power over time. He brought as a Creator, he took water which is in a sense not living, and changed it into wine which is living. And it was fermented wine, which means that it did not take time to make it. This shows the power that he has.

The first miracles concerned liquids. This might sound silly for me to emphasize this. The next miracle I am going to show deals with solids. Wine is living. What is wine like in the Gospel of John. He makes some relevant statements concerning it. It is very much like blood. In the Old Testament it says that "**the life is in the blood.**"² Wine does live. It is active if it is fermented wine. Here is the first miracle showing Christ's power over mass, over time and that He is a Creator. The first thing he deals with are liquids.

Though it is not the next miracle in time, the next miracle is that concerning the loaves and the fishes, where He did some changing there too. This is dealing with solids, not with liquids. You might wonder again, why am I emphasizing

liquids or solids. You find in nature liquids and solids and time. What we are going to find John showing as he said at the very beginning,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

• John 1:1–3

Those are the first three verses illustrate Jesus Christ being the Creator of physical, of spiritual, of liquid, of solid, of a person who created time, distance, space, and all of these things. It is really quite a scientific treatise if you look at it from a theological point of view.

The Miracle of the Loaves and the Fishes

Go to John 6:1, **"After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is [the sea of] Tiberias."** This shows again that he is writing to Gentiles, because everybody, all the Jews would call it Kinneret or Galilee. He puts it in the Gentile name, Tiberias.

"And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh."

• John 6:2–4

Would you have to tell Jews that the passover was a feast of the Jews? You would tell Gentiles that, but Jews would know that.

"When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, 'Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?' And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, 'Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.'"

• John 6:5–7

Formerly it was water and wine. Now it is going to be bread and it is going to be fishes. These two substances are very important symbolically.

"There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?' And Jesus said, 'Make the men sit down.' Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand."

• John 6:9–10

That is a lot of people. And they have five barley loaves and two small fishes. That is all they have.

"And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.' Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten."

• John 6:11–13

This was a great miracle that was taking place here. It is fundamentally different from changing one substance like water into another substance like wine. You know what Christ was doing here? He was creating all right, but creating something even in a greater way. He is showing His creative powers by making something out of nothing. Most remarkable is it not? He had something too, He had five barley loaves and He had two fishes. But obviously to feed 5,000 men, let alone the women and children, He was creating something out of nothing. He was doing it right there in front of His disciples and 5,000 men. Is that not proving who He was? He was a Creator, and He was showing them in the midst of His disciples, with solids this time.

What he used were loaves and fishes. He says I want you to gather up all these loaves, the fragments of them, and put them in baskets. I do not want any of it lost. That has some instruction in it itself. But they had twelve baskets. I do not have time to go into the symbol of why 12 baskets, but I am sure it is symbolic. They had them all left over, but it says **"that nothing be lost."** This relates to what He said in John 6:39,

"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

You see the symbol? Here He was creating something out of nothing, from a few barley loaves and fishes, He is creating a whole lot of stuff. But in creating

it He says I want nothing lost. I am the Creator, I want nothing lost. Interpreting it he then says in verse 39,

"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

It means that bread represented His people, that He was creating. Of course He was creating the bread right in front of them, but He was also going to save everybody that He has created. That is the point.

He is not going to lose one crumb. That is the teaching. A lot of people today say He is going to lose some. He is not going to lose any. He is going to gather it up in 12 baskets if He has to, but He is not going to lose one morsel of all that He has created with His own hands.

He also multiplied the fishes. Fishes are very interesting. After the resurrection of Christ there was one more miracle given, which is not in the 7 that I am giving here. That was when He met them over in Galilee. The apostles decided to go fishing. John 21:3,

"Simon Peter saith unto them, 'I go a fishing.' They say unto him, 'We also go with thee.' They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus [this was after his resurrection]. Then Jesus saith unto them, 'Children, have ye any meat' [food]? They answered him, 'No.' And he said unto them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.' They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved [undoubtedly John himself] saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits [about 100 yards],) dragging the net with fishes. [Fishes is the key, they are bringing the fishes.] As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread."

• John 21:3–9

Who is cooking this fish with this bread. It is Jesus, Christ resurrected from the dead.

"Jesus saith unto them, 'Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.' Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, 'Come *and* dine.' And none of the disciples durst ask him, 'Who art thou?' knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead."

• John 21:10–14

This incident may not seem very important, but John is a Gospel of symbolism. He is dealing with fish and bread. One of the major miracles was fish and bread back there (in John 6) creating that right in front of people.

The 153 Fish

Here was Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead. All sins have now been paid for. Jesus was now resurrected from the dead, which God the Father has done by His power. There was not any doubt in the apostles' minds now who He was. Here He is dining on fish and bread and asking them to dine on fish and bread. At the same time, hauling in 153 fish, not 154, not 152, but 153.

What about this number? From a numerological point of view it has a bit of significance, but I do not know if Christ is giving it from that point of view or not. If you take all the figures from 1 to 17 and add them up, like $1 + 2 + 3 + 4$ and so forth to 17, you get the number 153. That is true. I do not know if there is any significance to that. But Dr. Bullinger has pointed out that in the Hebrew (and let's admit this, the apostles were Hebrews) the word "sons of God" or *beni ha-Elohim* if you take the letters and you take the numerical value for each one of the letters, add it all up, it comes right on [it adds up] to 153. It makes you wonder whether or not these disciples getting the fish out of the Sea of Galilee, and He said I'm going to make you what? Fishers of men. One hundred and fifty-three, *beni ha-Elohim*, it could very well be they are going to be sons of the living God. This was after His resurrection.

What also was Christ eating here. He was eating fish. Afterward in the 2nd century C.E. it was quite common for Christians of the time to begin to use the symbol of the fish for Christianity. You still see some evangelical groups using it today. The word "fish" in the Greek is *ichthus*. It simply means fish. The interesting thing is that if you use this as an acrostic, which means to take the first letters and you use those letters in an acrostic.

<i>i</i>	<i>iesous</i>	Jesus
<i>ch</i>	<i>christos</i>	Christ
<i>th</i>	<i>theos</i>	God
<i>u</i>	<i>uios</i>	Son
<i>s</i>	<i>soter</i>	Saviour

What it actually says in acrostic is "Jesus Christ the Son of God, Savior." That is what *ichthus* means. Is it not interesting that fish are being used here. Who is Jesus Christ? He is the Saviour and He is the saviour of the whole world. This second miracle that I am mentioning (which is not the 2nd miracle in order), dealing with solids, is the miracle of making loaves and fishes out of nothing. This shows that He is a Creator.

He also in another miracle in John 6:16 it shows He has power over the elements which He has created.

"And when even was *now* come, his disciples went down unto the sea, And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea,"

• John 6:16–19a

This shows that the elements do not concern Him. He is not governed by the elements. After all, He is the Creator of them. Besides that,

"... and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, 'It is I; be not afraid.' Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went."

• John 6:19b–21

In the parallel passages in the 1st three Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, it mentions this. It says there was a great storm at the time. The storm ceased when He got into the boat. He was walking on the sea. That shows He has power over the elements that He created. Then when He steps into the ship, the storm immediately ceases. If we only have the Gospel of John to go on, it would seem

to say that the ship was immediately then, through space, taken to the port. The other three Gospels do say that it went under its own power. That is true.

The emphasis here is in this miracle (number 3 in my order) is that He has powers over all of the elements, the physical elements that He has created, whether it be the solids here on the earth, or whether it be the water or whether it be the atmosphere.

He also has power over space, not only over time, but over space, over distance. Distance is one of the five dimensions that make up our known physical world. Space is certainly one of them. Distance makes no difference to Christ. Look at this miracle here which shows this. It shows Him as the Creator and sustainer of everything in the universe.

"So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.'"

• John 4:46–48

They wanted to see signs and wonders. These are the 7 signs right here that God has given. There is an 8th one, that is the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This is one of them. **"The nobleman saith unto him, 'Sir, come down ere my child die'"** (John 4:49).

This is just like so many of us. We feel that maybe Jesus had power, or some man has power, but He has got to come and He has to touch a person on the head. That is how we look at it. Please come and do this. If you will come down and walk, or some way get in the presence so you can get your hand on him, then I know he will be healed. How many of us think that way. So many times we do. That is what the nobleman was saying,

"'Sir, come down ere my child die.' Jesus saith unto him, 'Go thy way; thy son liveth.' And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down [down the mountain slope toward Capernaum], his servants met him, and told *him*, saying, 'Thy son liveth'. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, 'Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.' So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, 'Thy son liveth': and himself believed, and his whole house. This

is again the second miracle [in order] *that* Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee."

• John 4:49b–54

What does this show? He has the power to heal people, but distance is no concern to Him. Space is of no concern to Him. Remember after His resurrection one of the women came to the tomb, seeing Him there, and she wanted to touch Him and He said, **"Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father."**

But the very afternoon of the resurrection day, He was saying to His disciples, touch me. Touch me here. Touch me there. He had ascended in that length of time, perhaps in a split second, to the Father in heaven and come back. This is in John too. But also we have this here that distance and space is of no concern to Him whatsoever. We think perhaps today that He is in heaven and not here. But we can be here instantly. He can be there instantly. This is showing Him to be the Creator. He created time and distance and He has power over time and distance.

Almost all of these things, these miracles we are looking at here, have to do with things created, or showing Him to be the Creator, as John called Him in the 1st chapter of the Gospel.

What about the fifth sign that I have here in my order. It shows that He has power over all law, even spiritual law. After all, He was the one that made Law. He is able to do with it as He pleases. A great miracle took place in John chapter 5. Look at this now.

It was a miracle of the restoring of health to a man. The man had an infirmity and for 38 years he could not walk. Apparently the man was able to walk as a child and he became infirm. So Jesus came along and was going to show that He can restore health.

In this incident here, it shows Him as a restorer of the limbs. He is capable of doing that. It also shows something else. In fact, the miracle is subsidiary of the overall principle of what happened on that particular day. Chapter 5 of John,

"After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. ... And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty

and eight years [not 39 years]. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool."

• John 5:1–3, 5–7a

This again shows mankind's ideas. You either have to come down and touch me like the nobleman said, or someone has to carry me down and put me in. How many times have you been seeing that put into action. I will send a minister with an anointed cloth or a bottle of oil. Not that that is wrong in itself necessarily, but you know, how many of us have said, you've got to do it. In everyone of these cases here, you find you do not have to do it. Jesus did not pick him up and put him in any water that was being troubled. In fact, the water was not even troubled at all. It says here,

"... but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. [that is all He said to him] And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath."

• John 5:7b–9

This is important. Who is the Creator being discussed here? Jesus Christ as John said in 1:1, **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."** Who are we talking about here? The Creator of heaven and earth. We are also talking about the one who rested on the 7th day at creation. We are also talking about the one who gave Moses the 10 Commandments. Who are we talking about? He has already been demonstrating here so far His power to create. He can do it and He is going to do it in all of these miracles. He is the Creator. This is the significance of what John is showing if we can just see it. He is talking about the Creator of heaven and earth. He is trying to point that out here. This man got his pallet and began to walk, but it says on the same day was the Sabbath.

"And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed [or pallet]."

• John 5:9–10

I do not care how many people are going to argue with me on this, I know for a fact and I can prove it from the Scripture, that according to the Old Testament, that man was doing an act which was unlawful. That is a fact. The Pharisees were correct. But Jesus told that man to take up that pallet and walk. The day was the Sabbath day. Do you see what John is getting at here?

(The next miracle is going to be when the man, he was not born blind, his eyes were made so he could see. It also says that when Jesus spat on the ground and took up the clay and put it in the man's eyes and said—that was also on the Sabbath day.) That is significant because here is a man who is nothing that the Creator of heaven and earth who gave the Sabbath day in the first place, gave all laws and everything. He is demonstrating in the midst of everybody that He is the Creator, and they ought to realized it. Here they are repudiating Him. Any Jew should have realized, theologically speaking, that if God were to come down in a new Mount Sinai of some kind and said keep Monday or keep Tuesday or keep no day, if they knew it was God, you know what every orthodox Jew would have done, they would have said, well, let's do it.

What was Jesus doing? He was absolutely demonstrating Himself to be the Creator, and they are criticizing Him because He says to a man, pick up your pallet and walk. Though it was illegal, that is quite true, it is not illegal when the Creator of heaven and earth tells a man He can do that on the Sabbath day.

It is an issue here of who are we talking about. Is He the Creator, or is He just some prophet of some kind, or just an ordinary man walking the street. Who are we talking about? When He tells you to pick up the bed on the sabbath, and break the Sabbath if you want to, you are going to have to argue with your Creator, if you are going to dispute with Him.

"The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, 'It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.' He answered them, 'He that made me whole, the same said unto me, "Take up thy bed, and walk.'" Then asked they him, 'What man is that which said unto thee, "Take up thy bed, and walk?'" And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, 'Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.' The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day."

• **John 5:10–16**

One of the major things that put Jesus Christ on the cross was this action on the Sabbath day. Not only that, but let us read the rest of it here.

"But Jesus answered them, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.'"

• **John 5:17**

If anybody says He was not working on the sabbath day, you are going to have to argue with John, because he said He was. He was working. That was illegal from the point of view of the Jews. Who are they talking about here? They are talking to the Creator of heaven and earth. That is what John is showing. If they are going to argue with the Creator, they are in serious difficulty.

"'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

• **John 5:17b–18**

That is what killed Him. That is what put Him on the cross, blasphemy because He said He was God. Every action demanded that He did show that He was God. What did they do? They repudiated Him.

The interesting thing about this is that this healing took place on the sabbath day. It shows that He has power over all laws, and He can do as He pleases with any of the laws and He does not have to be subject to any law that He has ever made or will make, because He is law personified. He can do as He pleases. It is about time people began to realize that.

The rest of this chapter shows Jesus saying, like in verse 22,

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

• **John 5:22–23a**

He speaks also of judgment.

"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

• John 5:30

This whole context here is showing that Jesus is the judge. He has proper judgment. He can tell people to work on the sabbath if He wants to, because He is the Creator. This is the key.

So this 5th point shows that He has power over all spiritual laws, not just over liquids, not over solids, not over distance and space, not over just time. He has power over law. This is what it is showing. It is demonstrating that He is the Word, the Creator of heaven and earth. He also was a restorer of this man's health.

In the next illustration which is the 6th one, is the man born blind. That is John chapter 9.

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, 'Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?'"

• John 9:1–2

Notice this, Jesus here is going to heal this man. I do not have time to go into it at length. He heals him, and you know the method by which He does it. In this case Jesus is not going to restore health to the man like the lame man, who had His health at one time. Jesus restored it. He can restore your health too. This time He is going to create something. He is going to create light to that man's eyes, again showing that this is the Creator.

When he was healed and his eyes were created, he had never seen a day in his life. Now he was seeing. This is showing Him as the Creator even of light for man. Verse 13,

"They brought to the Pharisees him that foretime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes."

• John 9:13–14

It is interesting that the two miracles, one of restoring a man to health, telling him to carry his pallet on the Sabbath day, and the other of creating light or eyesight to a man from nothing, creating it so that he now has eyes in his head. All of this was done on the Sabbath day.

"Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, 'He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.' Therefore said some of the Pharisees, 'This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day.' Others said, 'How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?' And there was a division among them."

• John 9:15–16

How many times have I heard people say, you're not of God because you don't do this or you don't do that. They will do it time and again. I do not mind people telling me that I am not God, because I do not do things right. But if someone comes in their midst doing all of these things creating out of nothing right in the midst of them, clearly showing who He is, and then come around and say to him, this man cannot be of God because He does these things on the Sabbath. He breaks the Sabbath. Something is wrong somewhere. Do you know who Jesus was? He was the Lord of the Sabbath. That is what it says in Mark. He is the owner of it. He allowed His disciples to go through the cornfields to pluck, to rub and to eat, which was illegal. The illustrations He gave were two illegal things, well one particularly, David went into the Tabernacle and ate the shewbread which he should not have done. Christ gives as an excuse for them to break the Sabbath, the fact that He allowed David to do it without retribution. He says I am the Lord of the Sabbath. I own it. It is mine. I can do as I please with it.

If He is the Creator, can He not do so? Of course He can. This is the whole object. This matter of, you can either do this on the Sabbath or not do this, you can argue back all you want to, but the object here, what is at stake is Christ's divinity over this matter of the Sabbath. Either He is the Creator and He was the one who not only created liquid, solid, time, space, distance, mass, everything there is, and also the Sabbath day and all laws—either He is that or He is not. If He is that, he has a right to change it or to do as He pleases with it, can He not? Of course He can. Here He is not only simply a restorer of health to a person, but a creator of sight. He did it on a day that the Jews did not like. Mankind does not like what He does, but He gives it anyway.

Notice the two illustrations here of the miracles. I have not time to comment on this, but from Isaiah you will recall it. He says when the Messiah comes He will cause the lame to walk and the blind to see. The two main miracles here discussed right now a lame man walking and a blind man seeing. It is a perfect fulfilment of these things. That is the 6th one.

The 7th miracle before Christ's death on the cross was perhaps the greatest of all because it shows the raising of Lazarus from the dead. That is in John 11:1–15, the whole chapter has it. I do not have time to refer to all of this. You know it. The interesting thing about this is that this is the 7th miracle. The 7th miracle, and 7th in order as well, is the final miracle other than the miracle of Christ's resurrection Himself, which is the 8th. But this is the final that He gives as far as John is concerned. It is the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Is this the Creator who can do this or is it not?

"Now a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, 'Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.' When Jesus heard *that*, he said, 'This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.' Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was."

• John 11:1–6

He did not even go to see him, which is unusual is it not? Many times we wonder why does He not come to us when we are sick, right on time.

"Then after that saith he to his disciples, 'Let us go into Judaea again.' His disciples say unto him, 'Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.'"

• John 11:7–9

He had healed the blind man previously and now he was seeing light. All of these things are tied together if you can just see it. I do not have time to go into it altogether here.

"'But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.' These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.' Then said his disciples, 'Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.' Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us

go unto him.' ... Then when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already."

• John 11:10–15, 17

Look at verse 34. You know the rest of the story.

"And said, 'Where have ye laid him?' They said unto him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, 'Behold how he loved him!' And some of them said, 'Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?' Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, 'Take ye away the stone.' Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, 'Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.' Jesus saith unto her, 'Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?' Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, 'Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.' And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth.' And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, 'Loose him, and let him go.'"

• John 11:34–44

This was the final miracle that Christ gave as far as John was concerned. You know what it was? The resurrection from the dead. Does this not show He is the Creator of life and death? Death, true, but life also? And that He can give it back if He pleases? This was the 7th miracle. It shows Him to be the Creator of everything to substantiate what John said at the very beginning.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

• John 1:1, 3

All of these miracles are showing Him in His power over all nature of things which are visible and invisible. They are carefully selected to do that very task, to be able to support Him to be Creator of heaven and earth. That is the significance. But the 7th and final, is His victory over death, which is most

important for all of us. He said that if we eat his flesh, which was like His bread; drink His wine, which was like his blood, we can have life.

All of these miracles really are interconnected with one another. If you have the light of the world, the blind man who received his light so he could see. All of these things are interconnected to be able to prove that He is the Creator.

But the 7th one there is the best one for all of us because it shows Him to have the power over death. He could give life to anybody. He gave it there to Lazarus. That was the 7th, up to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

But God the Father reserved the greatest miracle of all to be number 8, because that concerned Jesus Christ Himself. He died on the cross with the blood spilling, which is connected with the wine and the bread and everything of the former parts, but He dies on the cross for the sins of the world. Three days later He came up out of the grave. He came up out of the grave Himself, which is most remarkable. Not Lazarus this time.

There is a fundamental difference between the miracle of raising Lazarus and the miracle of raising Christ. Lazarus came back to physical life. Jesus Christ came back to life eternal. It is different. But yet it is the same but yet it is different. The emphasis is different. The power of it is different. When we see Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead (which is really one of the most provable things you could possibly imagine in history, you have here God the Father entering into the whole affair. Not only is Jesus the Creator, but here is the Creator dead and yet God the Father raises Him from the dead, back to life for all time to come. That is the power that is within God the Father's hand and grasp. He has given it to Jesus Christ.

When you put it all together, here you have John trying to substantiate—not trying, doing quite adequately I would say—he is selecting certain miracles to be able to prove the first three verses of what he starts out with. Again I rehearse them.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

• John 1:1–5

The first thing He starts out with is to show Jesus Christ as Creator. In the midst of the Jews back there in Palestine, John the apostle selects these very mature teachings to illustrate that Jesus Christ was indeed the Creator of heaven and earth.

- He created mass.
- He created time.
- He created space.
- He created and governs the elements.
- He was the one who put law in motion.
- He was the one who is given judgment and has judgment and of all laws.
- He is the one who restores people to health.
- He is the one who can create health or create life.
- He is the one who can bring people back from the dead.
- He is the one who can give spiritual life for all time to come.

It is all right here in the Gospel of John. Why is it? Because He is the Creator of all things. When Jesus was walking the streets of Jerusalem and Galilee some 1900 years ago, He was the Creator. John specifically brought out those 7 miracles, or the 8 if you want to put it that way, to be able to show who it was walking the streets of Jerusalem and Galilee. It was no ordinary man, but the Creator of heaven and earth.

As we found out above, and as we read in the Gospel itself, the main point that John wishes to illustrate in his writing of this Gospel is that Jesus *was* the Son of God. He writes,

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

• John 20:30–31

What did John mean by this expression "Son of God"? He gives us the meaning back at the very beginning of his Gospel. In fact you might say it is the beginning of the Gospel that gives the conclusion to what He is actually writing. That may sound like a paradox, but in actual fact that is the truth, because in the first three verses of his Gospel, he gives us the reason for writing His Gospel. He wants to introduce someone to us, someone who is important to him. That

someone is Jesus Christ, called the Word here in the beginning of John's gospel. He says this,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made."

• John 1:1–3

This is the introduction to John's Gospel. He is trying to show the individual that he is talking about. He is talking about no one less than the Creator of heaven and earth. To be the Son of God as John said in John 20:31, means that He is God, and He was coming into this world. He was pointing out that Christ was the Creator of heaven and earth. Read John 8:58. Jesus is talking to the Pharisees at this particular occasion. They were accusing Him of being just a young man, not very old, and they even say to Him you are not fifty years old. Jesus formerly said that He had actually seen Abraham. That was impossible, you are a very young man yourself, not even fifty years old. The reason they said fifty was because that was normally the retirement age for most people. They were saying, you are not even on a pension yet, they were saying by using that term "fifty years." We all know that Christ was little over 30 years—33½ when He died. This did not mean that He was close to fifty years, but simply they were saying, you're not even pensionable yet, yet you are saying you were with Abraham?

Notice Jesus' answer here because John is going to bring out the divinity of Christ in the answer that Christ gives to these Pharisees.

"Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.'"

• John 8:58

Notice those words. As soon as Jesus said that term right there, it says in verse 59,

"Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

• John 8:59

That itself was strange. They must have closed their eyes, or God blinded their eyes. It was a way of showing His divinity. The thing that upset those men the

most was when Jesus said **"Before Abraham was, I am."** To those Jews listening to Him it was almost blasphemy.

Back in Exodus at the time Moses was being called to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

"And Moses said unto God, 'Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them?' And God said unto Moses, 'I AM THAT I AM': and he said, 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.'"

• Exodus 3:13–14

"I am" is the present tense of the personal verb which means "I am." It means that He, "I" will be present continually. It gives the feeling, if you were "I am" in the past, that means you were present in the past. If you are "I am" now, you are present now. If you are "I am" in the future you will be present in the future. What was the name of God? God told Moses, you tell the children of Israel, **"I am that I am."** "I am" is God's name.

"And God said moreover unto Moses, 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: *this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.*'"

• Exodus 3:15

The memorial is "I am." "I am" is the God of Abraham. But Jesus said in John 5:58, **"Before Abraham, I am."** They said, well you're not even fifty years of age. By that statement right there, John is recording that Jesus Himself knew that He was the "I am" of the Old Testament. Or, to put it in modern terms, the YHVH of the Old Testament.

It is interesting that in John's Gospel, not only does John record Jesus as saying He was the "I am" that lived before the time of Abraham, but many of His expressions show this divinity, if we be willing to recall them. For example, the presentation of Christ as the *ego*, that means as the "I am" is very noteworthy. He said,

- **"I am the bread of life."** (John 6:35, 48, 51)
- **"I am the light of the world."** (John 8:12, 9:5)
- **"I am the good shepherd."** (John 10:11, 14)

- **"I am the vine."** (John 15:5)
- **"I am the resurrection."** (John 11:25)
- **"I am the life."** (John 1:4, 11:25, 14:6)
- **"I am the way."** (John 14:6)
- **"I am the truth."** (John 14:6)
- **"Before Abraham was, I am."** (John 8:58)

You can see all of these things occurring in John's Gospel are to support who He was. The first three verses show who He was.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

• John 1:1

"I am" is being talked about here. As I said a few moments ago, this word "I am" is the present tense. It always means present. It means continuous all the time. In the Bible, the Old Testament, over 7,000 times we find the word YHVH and it is used of God. There are other names, but this is the most consistent use of God for His name. It is called the tetragrammaton because four [Hebrew] letters make up this word YHVH. Not the vowels, but just the consonents. This word YHVH probably comes from using the abbreviations of the first letters in abbreviated form of the Hebrew verb "to be." That is an ordinary [*not decipherable*] verb.

What you would do is to take the first letter of this four-letter word that makes up the name YHVH, is "Y," which is supposed to be the first letter of the Hebrew letter "to be" in the past tense, which would mean "was." The "VH" which are the middle two letters of YHVH, they represent the letters which introduce the Hebrew verb "to be" in the present tense. The last letter "H" is the word that introduces the future tense of the verb "to be." You put all four letters together you get the past, you get the present and you get the future.

Is it not interesting that this is the name or this is what YHVH means, past, present and future. It signifies as James Moffat says in his translation of the Old Testament, "the Eternal One," the one who is always in existence, or as you might say, the "I am."

The Book of Revelation

Who is this "I am." You find this "I am" identified in the book of Revelation. Revelation was also written by John the Apostle.

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth."

• Revelation 1:4–5

I could go on and read the rest of the scripture, but here we find in verse 4 a description of God. He is called the one which is (present tense), the one which was (past tense) and the one which is to come (future tense). Verse 7,

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending,' saith the Lord, 'which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.'"

• Revelation 1:7–8

Here again we have the past tense, the present tense and the future tense, identified with the Almighty. Jesus said, **"Before Abraham was, I am"** always present. This word YHVH means past, present and future, always in existence, or you might say, the Eternal One. This is where the relationship between Christ and His godship was coming into the whole matter. What John in his Gospel is trying to point out is that coming into the world was not just an ordinary man when he tabernacled with flesh. It was none other than the Son of God Himself, the very creator of Heaven and Earth. How many times does John in his Gospel emphasize this? For example,

- Four times in his Gospel he mentions about Christ **"cometh"** or **"did come"** into the world (John 3:19; 6:14; 11:27; 16:28).
- He also said 8 different times that Christ came **"down from heaven"** in the Gospel of John (John 3:13; 6:33, 38, 41–42, 50–51, 58).
- He said one time that Jesus **"came from God"** (John 8:42).
- One time, **"was come from God"** (John 13:13).
- One time, **"came out from God"** (John 16:27).
- One time, **"camest forth from God"** (John 16:30).
- Another time he said, **"came forth from the father"** (John 16:28).
- Another time he said, **"came out from thee"** (in this case God the Father, John 17:8).

Time and again we see that John is emphasizing the divinity of Christ. One of the main reasons for writing his Gospel is to show that Jesus Christ came from the Father, that He had been with the Father before, that He had lived in glory with the Father. He puts into Christ's mouth (that is, John does) just prior to the evening prior to the crucifixion when He is talking with His apostles, he says to them,

"I have glorified thee on the earth [speaking of God the Father]: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

• John 17:4–5

This is John saying that Jesus had a pre-existence. Jesus had a pre-existence before Abraham, indeed the first three verses [of John] show Him to be the Creator of heaven and earth. Who is this? It is the Word. It is none other than Jesus Christ. The reason for John writing his Gospel is to point this out. He also is shown to be the Creator by the apostle Paul as we are well aware in Colossians 1, and in the 1st verses of that chapter.

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence."

• Colossians 1:15–18

Who are we talking about here in Jesus Christ? We are talking about God. We are talking about a member of the family of God that came into this world. That is why He is the Son of God. Back in 1 Corinthians, and I know we are aware of this. The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10 that when the Israelites were coming out of Egypt, someone led them along the way. It was YHWH in the Old Testament, the One who was, the One who is, the One who will be. Paul says it was Christ that followed them, Christ Jesus before He became a man on this earth.

What do we find here in the Gospel of John. John is trying to show who Christ was. When He had the argument about the Sabbath day with the Pharisees, they should not have had any reason whatsoever to argue with Him because John is

saying they are arguing with their Creator. This is the point. John is trying to show in the most beautiful of simplistic language, but full of lots of spiritual teaching, he is trying to show the cardinal theme in his mind above anything else. That is again the 1st three verses,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

• John 1:1–3

What happened to this Creator when it came to the 1st century C.E.? He left his heavenly abode. He came into the flesh. He lived for 33½ years. He dies on the cross and three days later was resurrected to go back to the Father where He had the glory before. That 3½ year message that He left, and it is recorded here in John, is to give us the encouragement, the strength and the understanding of what the Creator of heaven and earth was doing for us all. The message of John is to show who Jesus Christ was. He was nothing less than God

Notes

1 Later Dr. Martin came to understand that Jesus did not exactly die on a cross, but on a tree (see Acts 5:30, 10:39, 13:29 and 1 Peter 2:24). The term usually termed "cross" (Greek, *stauros*) indicates the cross-piece that the wrists were nailed to. See chapter 21 "The Manner of Jesus' Crucifixion" of his book, *Secrets of Golgotha*, 2nd Edition (Portland, OR: ASK Publications, 1996) pp. 288–305. Please keep this in mind when you read "cross" in the text above. DWS

2 See Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11, 14; Deuteronomy 12:23; and John 6:53–54.

Questionnaire

1. What's in a name? The Bible is kind of fond of name changes and here, Jesus changes Peter's name within seconds of meeting him. How do our names define us? Based on their meanings, is Peter a better name for this disciple than Simon?
2. Who do you think was getting married in Cana? What was their story? And why was Jesus on the guest list?
3. Is Peter the best choice to lead the disciples and the future church? If not, who would be better? The Beloved Disciple? Mary Magdalene? Lazarus?
4. For the woman caught in adultery in Chapter 8: Leviticus 20:10 requires that anyone discovered committing adultery should be stoned to death. So where was the guy?
5. Why did Jesus cry when he visited Lazarus's tomb? If he knew he would be able to bring him back, why would it be a sad moment? What does this say about grief? About death itself?
6. Who is responsible for Jesus's death in the Gospel of John? Judas? The religious authorities? Pilate? Or is it God?
7. Sure, popularity isn't everything, but is Jesus purposely trying to be unpopular? Is Jesus a hipster?
8. How are the healing stories of the man by the pools (Chapter 5) and the man who was born blind (Chapter 9) similar? How are they different?
9. The disciples lock themselves away after Jesus's death. Are their feelings of fear understandable? Or are they being cowards?
10. John's Gospel has been used by some people to promote violence and intolerance against other religious groups. Do you think these interpretations hold up? Can a reader still find value in a text that has sometimes been used to hurt others?
11. How would John's Gospel be different if it were written specifically for non-Christians?
12. Is it really fair to condemn Judas? After all, if it's God's plan for Jesus to die, isn't Judas just helping that along? Does Judas really have a choice in the matter or has he just been set up as the fall guy from the beginning?
13. How would this story be different if Jesus were a woman? Would the world have responded differently to God's only daughter?
14. C.S. Lewis once wrote: There were only three ways a person could view Jesus: either he was a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord. Do you agree or disagree?
15. Why is John's Gospel so different from the other three gospels? Do you think the authors had read Matthew, Mark, and Luke? How do its differences set it apart and make it special?

16. John's Gospel is the last of the four gospels to be written. How does this affect our view of it?

Another Set of Questions for Personal Evangelism

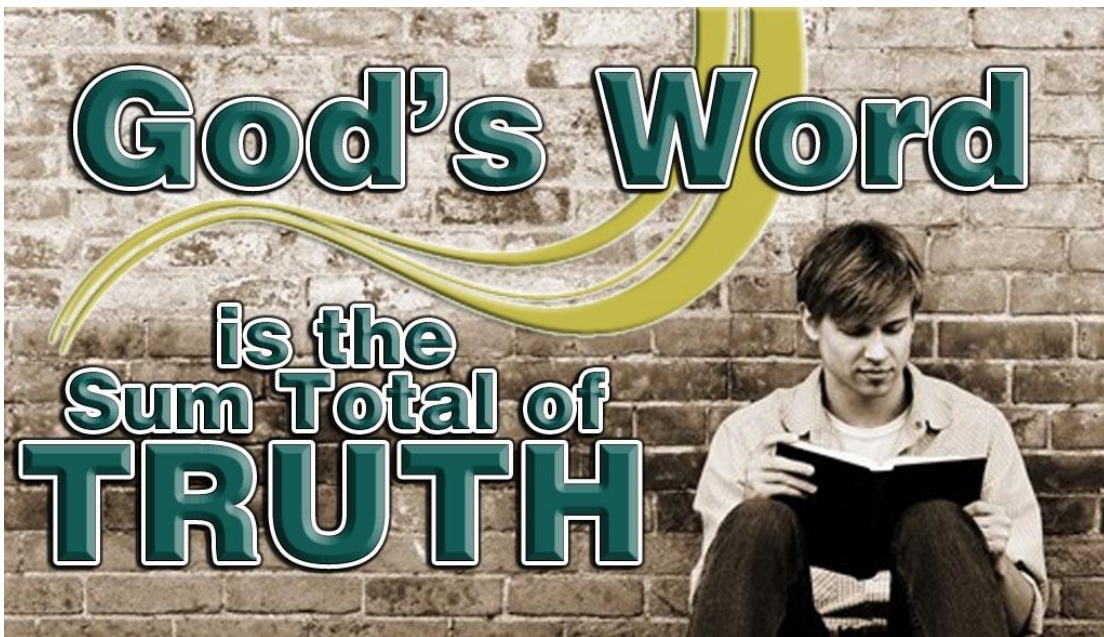
The Gospel of John is very important in your preparation to personal evangelisation.

1. Why did God give us four Gospels?
2. What is the harmony of the Gospels?
3. When were the Gospels written?
4. What were the key events in the life of Jesus Christ?
5. What does John 1:1,14 mean when it says that Jesus is the Word of God?
6. What does it mean that the Word became flesh (John 1:14)?
7. What should we learn from the life of John the Baptist?
8. What does it mean that Jesus is the Lamb of God?
9. Why did Jesus choose the wedding at Cana for His first miracle?
10. Did Jesus change the water into wine or grape juice?
11. How many times did Jesus cleanse the temple? Why did He cleanse the temple?
12. What does it mean to be born of water?
13. Does John 3:5 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?
14. Does John 3:13 mean that no one went to Heaven before Jesus?
15. What does John 3:16 mean?
16. What does it mean that Jesus is God's only begotten son?
17. What should we learn from the woman at the well?

18. What did Jesus mean when He spoke of living water?
19. Why did Jesus tell people to 'go and sin no more' if sinlessness is impossible?
20. What does it mean that God is spirit?
21. What happened at the Pool of Bethesda?
22. What can we learn from Jesus' feeding of the 5,000?
23. What was the meaning of Jesus walking on water?
24. What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am the Bread of Life" (John 6:35)?
25. Does John 7:53—8:11 belong in the Bible?
26. What was Jesus writing in the dirt when the Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery?
27. What did Jesus mean when He said "he who is without sin can cast the first stone"?
28. What did Jesus mean when He said "I am the Light of the World" (John 8:12)?
29. Why did Jesus spit for some of His miracles?
30. What does it mean that 'the truth will set you free' (John 8:32)?
31. What does it mean that Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44)?
32. What happened at the Pool of Siloam?
33. What did Jesus mean when He said 'I AM'?
34. How is Jesus the "True Shepherd" in John 10:1-5?
35. What did Jesus mean when He said "I am the good Shepherd?"
36. What did Jesus mean when He said "I am the door" (John 10:7)?

37. What does it mean that the thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10)?
38. Who are the “other sheep” mentioned in John 10:16?
39. What did Jesus mean when He said, ‘I and the Father are one’ (John 10:30)?
40. What did Jesus mean when He said “I am the Resurrection and the Life” (John 11:25)?
41. Jesus wept - why did Jesus weep?
42. Do we receive mansions in heaven?
43. What is an alabaster box?
44. What was the significance of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples?
45. What did Jesus mean when He said “I am the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6)?
46. Is it really possible for Christians to do greater works than Jesus?
47. If Jesus was God, why did He say "The Father is greater than I" in John 14:28?
48. What did Jesus mean when He said “I am the True Vine” (John 15:1)?
49. What does it mean that the Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment?
50. Who is the son of perdition?
51. Is Jesus God? Did Jesus ever claim to be God?
52. What is the significance of the triumphal entry?
53. Who was the disciple whom Jesus loved?
54. What happened in the upper room?

55. What happened during Jesus' last hours on earth?
56. What are the last seven sayings of Christ and what do they mean?
57. What did Jesus mean when He said "It is finished"?
58. What is the significance of the "folded napkin" in Christ's tomb after the resurrection?
59. What is the correct interpretation of John 20:23?
60. After His resurrection, why did Jesus tell Mary not to touch Him, but later tell Thomas to touch Him?
61. Why did Jesus ask Peter "Do you love me?" three times?
62. Why did Jesus tell Peter to "feed my sheep" in John 21?
63. Can the various resurrection accounts from the four Gospels be harmonized?



On Personal Evangelism

Disclaimer: *The opinions expressed are those only of the writer and do not reflect any official position of any religious movement, denomination, organization, or body. This chapter is interdenominational.*

Personal evangelism is a natural extension of being a good example. It is going one short step beyond shining as a light; it is simply verbalizing to friends, neighbours, co-workers, and strangers the blessings that come from a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Of course, most of us do not find it very easy to take that one short step so the more we can know about conversion and about evangelism, the more effective we will be in sharing our faith with others.

Progressive Nature of Conversion

We often think of conversion, the desired end result of evangelism, as an event that occurs at a single point in time. However, conversion is a process that can take many years. To be sure, accepting Jesus Christ as Saviour is the climax, but consider how many steps a person must go through before he gets to that point:

1. To begin with, a person may have absolutely no concept of God, of life after death, of sin, or of salvation.
2. A person comes to believe in a Supreme Being.
3. He comes to believe in life after death and learns the basic concept of God's plan of salvation.
4. He comes to recognize his personal need for salvation.
5. He is gripped with the conviction that he must do something about the Gospel, often as a result of personal suffering or frustration.
6. He repents and accepts Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour.
7. He is baptized and receives the Holy Spirit.
8. He begins the process of overcoming and growth as a Christian.

This process can take place very slowly or it can be compressed into a short period. Consider the conversion of the Apostle Paul. He was struck down on the road to Damascus and came to accept Jesus in a matter of moments. However, he already believed in a Supreme Being; he already had a general concept of God's plan of salvation; he knew about sin. All he needed was to be brought face to face with Jesus as the Messiah. The process was well underway before Paul went to Damascus.

Contrast Paul's situation with that of someone who does not even believe in the Bible or in God. It does little good to urge an atheist to "give his heart to the Lord." He is back on step 1 of the progression outlined earlier in this article, and we are trying to rush him to step 6. Many zealous Christians, oblivious to where a person is, in this progression, have unnecessarily made themselves and the Gospel look ridiculous by their hard sell, pre-packaged approach. In fact, many non-Christians are extremely sensitive about being witnessed to. I once said to a salesman, "Can I ask you a question?" He replied, "Let us see, usually when people ask that, they want to know if I have been saved."

Some Christians have been told to keep their religion to themselves, after opening a Bible in a public place. These people (those doing the telling) have been sensitized by insensitive soul-grabbers with "canned" witnessing presentations.

Because conversion is a process, we need to be very aware of where a person is spiritually before we begin to evangelize. The Apostle Paul set an excellent example for us. He became "all things to all men!"

"To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law To those not having the law I became like one not having the law . . . To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some,"
I Corinthians 9:20-23.

Part of the challenge of personal evangelism is to really get to know people and to minister to them where they are.

Because conversion is a process, you generally cannot unload the whole message of the Gospel at one time. In most situations you will only be able to plant a seed, which will take time to germinate and grow. Others may plant more seeds and water. Still others may reap the harvest, long after you are out of the picture. You may reap the harvest, but it is really God's. Remember to proclaim God's Word, not yours. It is God who must grant the increase. You must simply have faith that the seeds you plant will germinate. In due season they will bear fruit, for Him.

Personal Needs

Individuals with whom you might want to share the Gospel have various needs, but not all are felt at a given point in time. Their minds will tend to screen out those things that do not pertain to their personal needs.

All people have a need to know Jesus Christ, to be forgiven their sins, to be unburdened from the load of guilt they carry. However, if they do not feel these needs, you will have little success trying to fill them. Your words will go right over their heads!

The challenge in personal evangelism is to love people enough to learn what needs they are feeling, and to show how the Gospel fills those needs.

If they feel lonely, show how Jesus can become a companion.

If they feel hurt, show how God can help them bear the pain.

If they struggle with sickness, show them how Jesus provides comfort and balm for suffering.

If they are feeling weakness, show them how God can provide strength.

It is easy for people to feel physical needs and to desire only physical, materialistic solutions; many preachers today proclaim a gospel of physical health and wealth. However, complete obedience to God's laws does bring blessings; the primary message of the Gospel is a spiritual, eternal one. All people of faith in the Bible eventually died, many in an untimely fashion; many suffered terribly during their lives; but all looked forward to eternal life in God's kingdom. That promise is the heart of the Gospel.

Pray for Love, Wisdom, Courage

Because we cannot possibly know all we should about personal evangelism and the needs of the people we talk to, we need the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Specifically, we need love, wisdom, and courage.

We need love because it must be the overriding motivation for personal evangelism. We must care deeply about others and want to see them translated from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of God. Love must shine through to others so that they sense that they are really being loved, and not that they are being preached at or recruited.

We need wisdom to know when and how to evangelize. Pray for wisdom to know what needs a person is feeling, where he/she is relative to conversion; pray for the right words to effectively minister to their needs.

We need courage to speak. So often we have opportunities, but we are afraid of being embarrassed, of making a fool out of ourselves, or simply of striking up a

conversation with a stranger. It is always easier to say nothing. Pray for courage to speak up when you have the opportunity.

After you have shared a part of God's truth with someone, pray that the Holy Spirit will work with his mind, that the seed you have planted will germinate and that God will send other people to help it grow.

God Must Call

It is certain that God must call a person before he can ever come to repentance. Jesus said plainly, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day," **John 6:44**. No amount of human wisdom can open the mind of another person. Unfortunately, some Christians have used this fact as an excuse not to evangelize. They reason that God is going to call whom He wants when He is ready, so there is no need to exert any effort to share the Gospel.

Needless to say, God does use human instruments. Chances are you were led to know Jesus Christ, at least partially, through the ministry of another human being. God can certainly call people in a variety of ways, but the vast majority have been introduced to the Gospel through other people. Witness the thousands converted on the Day of Pentecost, **Acts 2:41**; witness the Samaritans converted through the preaching of Philip, **Acts 8:6**; witness the Ethiopian eunuch, **Acts 8:26-40**. Witness Paul's question in **Romans 10:14**:

"And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

There is no doubt that God must open a person's mind before he can be converted. However, God gives us the privilege, He gives us the duty to sow seeds of truth, some of which will germinate and bear fruit. If we neglect to sow those seeds, God will use other persons or other methods, but we lose out on the opportunity to love our neighbour in the greatest possible sense, sharing with them the greatest gift of all, the Gospel.

Radiating Total Security

From time to time I have had conversations with members of groups who think that theirs is the one true Church, that they have the exclusive or primary revelation of God's truth that God is dealing only or primarily through their group or their leader. These people exude such a sense of peace and security; they are so sure, so confident. They know and know that they know, and it shows in their conversations.

Such confidence is contagious. Others see it and are drawn to it. They want to be secure. They want to be part of such a body of true believers so as to escape from doubt, anxiety and uncertainty. They will even accept all kinds of far-out doctrines and practices in order to obtain that sense of security.

I remember back during the early years of my ministry when I was part of such a one-true-church. I must have exuded supreme confidence in my work, because many times people said to me, "I wish I could have your faith." Of course, my faith was in the organization as much as in God. I did not distinguish between the two because I firmly believed that the organization was God's end-time work on earth. Of course, in time God showed me the difference between the two; and when I was forced to reject the organization, I was able to continue my relationship with God.

My point is this: If people can radiate such an aura of confidence in a group or in a human guru, why cannot Christians do the same for Jesus Christ? Of all people on earth, we should be confident. We should be true believers. We should radiate security and serenity, so much so, that those around us find themselves drawn to it. Of course, we are still human; we do have to fight discouragement. On the whole, our lives should stand as beacons of confidence in an age of uncertainty.

I think it is a mistake for Christians to fall into the trap of dwelling on the economic, political, and military uncertainties in our world. Certainly, we should be aware of world problems; but our primary focus should be on the certainty of how it is all going to turn out. We should radiate absolute confidence in the future of the world and in our personal future. We know what lies ahead. We have read the last chapter of the Book. We know that all the kingdoms of men will become the kingdom of Christ!

We need to radiate this confidence and assurance to all. Let us be the ones who draw others to God through the confidence we have in Him and in His plan for us and the world.

The Challenge of Personal Evangelism

In **Acts 8:4** is recorded the account of an early persecution against the church in Jerusalem, with many of the brethren being scattered: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."

The evangelistic zeal of the early Christians caused the Church to grow very rapidly until it had reached practically every corner of the Roman Empire.

In stark contrast to this record, the modern churches, particularly in North America and in Western Europe, especially among Sabbath-keepers, experience very little growth, a few per cent per year. A hard look at this growth reveals that even these minimal figures are not always what they seem to be. Much of the growth is not really evangelism at all but "brand switching" as the new members of one church are the lost members of another. Real evangelism, turning someone from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, is rare. In our affluent world, we have lost the zeal of the persecuted Christians described in **Acts 8:4**.

Why So Little Evangelism?

There are many reasons and excuses for the low level of evangelism. I have heard many and used some myself: "It is easy to get people to come to church on Sunday, but the Sabbath doctrine is too hard for people to accept." (This is not the point.) "God has to call people." "I do not believe in cheap grace." "All the other churches lead them to Christ, our job is to teach them true doctrines." "We are not called to evangelize only but to teach." "We do not want to be like all the other Christians." "We are interested in growth in quality, not in numbers."

The theology that says this is not the *only* day of salvation, that there will come a future opportunity for the vast majority of humanity to know the Saviour, takes away a lot of the pressure to preach the Gospel now. Compare this with the theology that says that this is the only day of salvation and if your neighbour is **not** saved now, he will suffer never-ending torment in hell. A negative motivation to be sure, but motivation, nevertheless.

Another factor has to do with expectations. People tend to do what [they feel] is expected of them. Jehovah's Witnesses expect their members to go knocking on doors. So what do they do? They knock on doors and grow. Mormons expect young men to devote a couple of years to missionary work. So what happens? Young men are out knocking on doors and they grow. Some churches expect and teach their people to pay and pray, and that is what happens.

Too many of us have come to expect no evangelism. So guess what? There is no evangelism. Even though there are many of us (all of us, to one degree or another) who have a gift of evangelism, our negative expectations put the lid on that gift. Exactly the opposite of what should be happening! Paul exhorted Timothy, "... stir up the gift of god, which is in thee ..." (**II Timothy 1:6**). The gift of personal evangelism needs to be stirred up, not quashed!

Uncertainty About What the Gospel Is!

If the bugler blows an indistinct call on the bugle, the troops will not know whether they are supposed to advance, retreat, or chow down! If the Church does not know precisely what its mission is, it will stand still and begin going backwards. If it does not know precisely what the Gospel is, other gospels will emerge. This is exactly what is happening in our society. To some the Gospel is the truth about the *true* Jesus of the Bible as opposed to the *false* Jesus of church traditions. To some it is personal success and happiness through Jesus Christ. To some it is warning the nation of God's wrath. To some it is restoring the *full* gospel. To some it is restoring the pure religion God gave to ancient Israel. To some it is a message about health and wealth, blessings that come through obedience to God. Some want to preach a gospel of spiritual experience; some a gospel of obedience to laws; some a gospel that does not offend the rational mind of Western man.

Perhaps the differences among some of these gospels seem subtle; but the differences are real enough to create uncertainty. Many Christians are not sure what to share with their neighbours. Is it the true doctrines, as the Seventh day, the impending doom on our nation, or the laws of God? Their uncertainty results in inactivity. They share nothing, or what they do share is diluted by what others share.

The Apostle Paul made it clear that there is one true Gospel. "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified," (**I Corinthians 2:2**).

This Gospel is too simple for some; too "Protestant" for others. It is the simplicity of the Gospel that turns a child of the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.

There may be some truth in all the gospels mentioned above; and certainly there is something to be said for the pursuit of truth. Apollos is an example of a man quite able to hold his own in theological discussions and disputes about true doctrines. He was an eloquent man. But all his efforts had one focus: "Proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (**Acts 18:24-28**). Today, we can devote tremendous amounts of time and energy to discovering Biblical truth, all the while ignoring our neighbour who is floundering in the world of spiritual darkness!

If the Church of Jesus Christ is to effectively carry on the commission given originally to the Apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations, it must focus on

the Gospel, the only true Gospel, probably best summarized in **John 3:16**: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

If we really love the world, if we love our neighbours as God does, we must feel some urge to share with them the greatest truth of all - the truth about the Messiah, and the opportunity to be in His kingdom.

Love Must Motivate

There are many forces that can motivate one to preach the Gospel. We can evangelize because of guilt - believing that it will be our fault if we do not try to rescue our neighbours from an ever-burning hell fire. We can do it because of desire for reward - we want a brighter, bigger crown at the resurrection; or because we want the praise of fellow Christians. We can do it because it is expected of us, because it is our job, or to get a paycheck (**I Timothy 3:3; Philippians 1:15-17**). But these are the wrong reasons.

Our primary motivation should be love! We should care so much about other people, as potential sons of God, that we want to see them there with us, standing before Jesus Christ on that great day!

Personal Evangelism

There are many ways to evangelize. Very popular today are the impersonal media of radio, digital TV and print. (Though, very few people watch religious programmes on TV in most Western countries.) But, time and time again, surveys show that the most effective evangelism is personal together with the example of one's own conduct. People talking to people!

Personal evangelism, as I am presenting it here, is not about knocking on doors (though that is great for those who are so motivated); it is not about passing out tracts on street corners (which is also fine). What it is about is you, as an individual, in your daily contact with family, friends, co-workers, in a very natural, and sincere way, sharing the truth about what Jesus Christ can do in individual lives.

Vitally important to personal evangelism is the example of your life. All that you say and do, or do not say and do not do, reflects on Jesus Christ. Without saying a word, you *are* a witness. Unfortunately, all too many Christians, by their impatience, unkindness, intolerance, and selfishness are poor witnesses! My prayer is that your life will shine as a light on a hill!

But personal evangelism involves going a step beyond the example you set. It involves speaking about the hope that lies within you, about Jesus Christ, about the Gospel; it involves planting seeds of good news in the minds of those around you - seeds that will germinate in the minds of those whom God is calling. Evangelism is greatly affected by your personal witness. If you are a poor example, your evangelism will be ineffective at best. At worst, it can make the Saviour you proclaim a stench in the nostrils of those who see that your actions are different from your words. This does not mean you have to be perfect before you can evangelize. It simply means you must be doing your best, while admitting your failures, to live according to God's ways.

A Practical Program

Here is a practical program to help you begin, very naturally and gradually, to practice personal evangelism. You can use it as an individual. But it will be much more effective if you employ it in conjunction with others in your Sabbath or Sunday School class, Bible study group, or any other fellowship. You can use it in cooperation with people of different churches, because it focuses on sharing Jesus Christ, not on doctrines, church organizations, or traditions.

1. *Create a climate for personal evangelism.* Create an atmosphere that encourages those with the gift of evangelism to understand and use it. This can be accomplished by preaching on the subject (if you are a preacher), by reading books and articles about it, praying about it and discussing it with others of like mind. The vast majority of Christians can/should be evangelizing to a much greater degree than they are. With encouragement and training they can do it very effectively.

2. *Learn to recognize opportunities for personal evangelism.* Far too many of us realize opportunities for evangelizing only after they are past. For example, my wife had a conversation with a Roman Catholic neighbour who was talking about the challenges she faced in teaching Sunday School. It was a perfect opportunity to ask a question like, "What do you teach in Sunday School about repentance from sins and accepting Jesus as Saviour?" Once I was talking to a former member of a Church I used to pastor. She had drifted away from God altogether and commented that if her son went to Vacation Bible School and heard about Jesus, he would likely ask, "Jesus who?" It was a perfect opportunity for me to have asked, "Well, what do you believe about Jesus?"

Of course, these openings for sowing seeds of the Gospel were gone before we recognized them as such. But now, with patience and effort, we are beginning to

see opportunities as they present themselves and to take advantage of them before they are gone.

Learn to identify opportunities whether during or afterwards. Eventually, with prayer, with increased awareness and expectation, and with God's help, you will be able to recognize them as they occur.

3. *Talk regularly with others about opportunities for evangelism.* Talk about opportunities missed; and opportunities taken. Share your experiences so that others may learn from them. Listen to other experiences and learn from them. Ask others for suggestions about how to handle given situations. If possible, do some role playing to practice talking about your faith and about the basic message of salvation.

In our local Bible studies, we have begun devoting a small portion of time *at every meeting* to talking about evangelism. It helps us look outward! It reminds us of one of our primary missions as a body! It raises our consciousness about opportunities and helps prepare us to meet them.

4. *Pray daily about personal evangelism. Pray for love, wisdom, courage!* Pray for God to give you deep love for those who do not have a personal relationship with Him. Pray for wisdom in knowing how to plant seeds in their minds. Pray for the courage to plant those seeds when the opportunities arise.

5. *Find tools that can be used in personal evangelism.* Build up a supply of tracts, booklets, leaflets, books and cassette tapes that can be used as appropriate in your personal evangelism.

6. *Begin to evangelize.*

7. *Share your experiences with others to encourage them.*

There is no magic in this. It is something virtually all of us can do, but most of us do not. Yet, if we did, the growth of the Church would be so much greater than it is. Some churches spend millions of dollars on mass media evangelism for growth rates of a few per cent. A small group of people evangelizing on a personal basis can do so much more with virtually no money. If only one out of five members of your fellowship evangelizes and is instrumental in bringing one person to Christ in a year; and if only one out of five of those new Christians seeks to fellowship with you, your group will be growing at four percent a year which is almost as fast as the fastest growing major denominations world-wide, which are spending millions of dollars.

To be sure, our concern is not numbers for the sake of numbers, growth for the sake of growth. Rather, our concern is love for individuals who do not know their Lord and Saviour. The challenge for us, as individuals, is to zealously share with those around us the blessing of salvation through Jesus Christ. Just like the early Christians scattered by persecution, let us go everywhere sharing the good news with others.

Has God called you to the ministry?

Has God called you to ministry? Though all Christians are called to serve the cause of Christ, God calls certain persons to serve the Church as pastors and other ministers. Writing to young Timothy, the Apostle Paul confirmed that if a man aspires to be a pastor, "it is a fine work he aspires to do." [1 Timothy 3:1] Likewise, it is a high honor to be called of God into the ministry of the Church. How do you know if God is calling you?

First, there is an inward call. Through His Spirit, God speaks to those persons He has called to serve as pastors and ministers of His Church. The great Reformer Martin Luther described this inward call as "God's voice heard by faith." Those whom God has called know this call by a sense of leading, purpose, and growing commitment.

Charles Spurgeon identified the first sign of God's call to the ministry as "an intense, all-absorbing desire for the work." Those called by God sense a growing compulsion to preach and teach the Word, and to minister to the people of God.

This sense of compulsion should prompt the believer to consider whether God may be calling him to the ministry. Has God gifted you with the fervent desire to preach? Has He equipped you with the gifts necessary for ministry? Do you love God's Word and feel called to teach? Spurgeon warned those who sought his counsel not to preach if they could help it. "But," Spurgeon continued, "if he cannot help it, and he must preach or die, then he is the man." That sense of urgent commission is one of the central marks of an authentic call.

Second, there is the external call. Baptists believe that God uses the congregation to "call out the called" to ministry. The congregation must evaluate and affirm the calling and gifts of the believer who feels called to the ministry. As a family of faith, the congregation should recognize and celebrate the gifts of ministry given to its members, and take responsibility to encourage those whom God has called to respond to that call with joy and submission.

These days, many persons think of careers rather than callings. The biblical challenge to "consider your call" should be extended from the call to salvation to the call to the ministry.

John Newton, famous for writing "Amazing Grace," once remarked that "None but He who made the world can make a Minister of the Gospel." Only God can call a true minister, and only He can grant the minister the gifts necessary for service. But the great promise of Scripture is that God does call ministers, and presents these servants as gifts to the Church.

One key issue here is a common misunderstanding about the will of God. Some models of evangelical piety imply that God's will is something difficult for us to accept. We sometimes confuse this further by talking about "surrendering" to the will of God. As Paul makes clear in Romans 12:2, the will of God is good, worthy of eager acceptance, and perfect. Those called by God to preach will be given a desire to preach as well as the gifts of preaching. Beyond this, the God-called preacher will feel the same compulsion as the great Apostle, who said, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" [1 Corinthians 9:16]

Consider your calling. Do you sense that God is calling you to ministry, whether as pastor or another servant of the Church? Do you burn with a compulsion to proclaim the Word, share the Gospel, and care for God's flock? Has this call been confirmed and encouraged by those Christians who know you best?

God still calls... has He called you?

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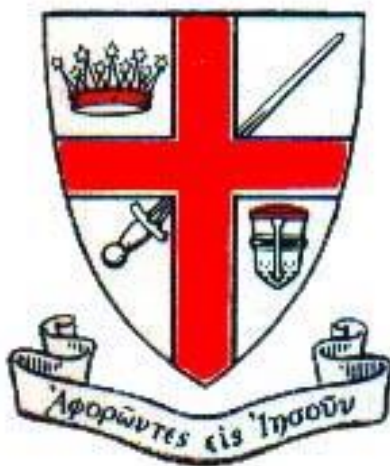
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